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&

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292, Comrade Harbanslal Marg, Mumbai-400 022.

Phones : 407 88 88 / 403 02 13 / 401 51 64 / Fax : 409 22 11

E-Mail : shanmugananda@hotmail.com

Website : www.shanmukhananda.org.in

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IN FOCUS

## SHANMUKHA

**SHANMUKHA** wishes all its Contributors, Readers, Advertisers and Well-wishers, a very Happy New Year and a Happy New Millennium.

**SHANMUKHA** dedicates this issue to the National Poet who was a Mahakavi and "a colossus of multi-faceted dynamism", a music maestro and to a dance doyen whose contributions to our Culture can hardly be measured in mere words.

An aggressive freedom - fighter with a heart full of love and affection' an institution himself, a noblest musical soul, a patriot with a large vision, deep conception and immaculately appealing delivery. That is Mahakavi Subramanya Bharati in a rare profile.

An octogenarian Natyacharya goes nostalgic down memory lane from Sadir to Bharata Natyam; while a writer explains why the Bhakti tradition in music of Alwars, especially Nammalwar, serves as an introduction to Tyagaraja.

Karnatic Music is Close to Heart, Close to Life to Sangita Kalanidhi of the year who speaks his passion in his presidential address to the Meccademy.

Do present trends move in the right direction? - A musician examines 'Divine' Karnatic Music.

The death of Sangita Kalanidhi K. S. Narayanaswamy has left a void in Veena and his Sishyas of two generations pay their tributes to the Guru recalling the Isai Gnani's erudition, scholarship and felicity in teaching-performing.

"Silenced Cymbals" is again a tribute of a Natyacharya to the doyen, Guru Kittappa Pillai an embodiment of Sampradaya and whose death has weakened the roots of tradition in Bharata Natyam.

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## Mahakavi Subramanya Bharati

(A colossus of multi-facted dynamism)

It is a flat endless carpet of arid terrain, the people of which may now and then be {not necessarily will be} happy if and when adequate rains descend. The region is the most eligible to invoke, and the perfect qualifying proof to, the famous couplet of administrative wisdom of Sage Tiruvalluvar that people in tracts depending on the vagaries of occasional rains are those who eternally look to the ruler (government) for sustenance :

*Vanokki nirkum makkal ellam,  
mannan kol noki nirkum kudi*

Poor Muthuswami Dikshitar, on return from his pilgrimage in the north, was trekking through this near-dreary area alone in search of his brother, perhaps his only relative then alive, presumably with his *madisanji* (fibre bag) containing just a pair of clothes, Vibhuti and puja materials. What else had he in this world? Absolutely nothing sans cerebral assets such as Vaggeyakara eminence, scholarship, Bhakti, astrology and profound spiritual wisdom which might have won the esteem of a King Janaka or the earlier Parikshit. I hope admirers of Dikshitar do not take offence when I say, poor Dikshitar. It was a fact that he was steadfast in his enduring marriage with poverty in material terms. He had never chosen, nor was there any occasion, to contradict or modify *Hiranmayim Lakshmim sadha bhajami, hinamana vasrayam tyajami* (Lalitha). In fact, is there any case other than Kuchela (Sudhama) where the bhakta had made a U-turn from rags to riches? (Pray, let me not be condemned as an atheist, which certainly I am not.) His enlightened Adwaitic heart melted on seeing the misery of the people and he sang '*Anandamrta karshini* in raga Amrtavarshini and brought plenty of rains to the rain-starved region. Can there be eternal annual visits by a Dikshitar to secure rains? However it is this area that gave the spiritual colossus, Sri Ramana Rishi from Tiruchuli and Sri Subramanya Bharati, the socio-

political and domineering, gigantic patriot Vaggeyakara from Ettayapuram. Where the soil is dry, jasmine smells sweeter! How true it is even among humans!

(Just an incidental observation that springs out of the last two sentences. When the English Member of the Government of India - similar to the Union Minister for Home - went on praising, in the Parliament, the living conditions in Andamans, then reserved mostly for outlawed criminals, renowned parliamentarian Satyamurti quipped. 'Why not you settle down there?' Even so, some one may suggest my staying at Ettayapuram region. I have no objection but the only deterrent is whether the Lord would give me the needed lease of life to pack up, proceed and settle there!)

\* \* \*

The spirit of independence that was lying dormant since 1857 had once again been kindled in 1885 and political, economic and social environment needed a man of resolute will and determination, absolute patriotism and readiness to sacrifice his all, scholarship with mastery in arts and communicative skills to arouse the slumbering masses of Tamil Nadu, sway their feelings and lead them on the path of social emancipation, economic development and political freedom. A humble family at Ettayapuram headed by Chinnaswami Ayyar had already presented a child on December 11, 1882 that was to answer the call of the mother country for such a person. The child lost its mother quite early but it did not deter his progress. That it was born with a mission was evident quite early when it got the title 'Bharati' at the age of eleven! Education stopped with the fifth form (10th standard). Where is need for a degree to men of destiny and who has the competence and authority to confer that? In tune with the prevailing practice, at the age of sixteen, the age made immortal by Sage Markandeya, he married, rather was married to Chellammal then aged seven! Not improbable that both of them had played with pebbles on the silent streets of little Ettayapuram. Bharati's father died when Chellammal progressed to the age of eight!

## "Patanavasam"

Four years at Benares (1898-1902) was spent in studies. Those were the impressionable years of the great bard-in-the-making. The ancient city of Benares with its penetrating roots in the vibrant history of Bharat, varied culture and hoary civilization should have suckled him, as it did with Muthuswami Dikshitar of the Classical Carnatic Trinity, with precious intellectual gifts that are rare and unavailable in schools and colleges or anywhere. On return, his innate genius in composing Tamil songs sprang into action and quite soon, his song appeared in *Vivekabhanu* in print and for a time in 1904 he was teacher in Tamil in the Setupati School, Madurai. His *Swadesa Gitangal* appeared in book form in 1908 and he joined the paper *India*. He evaded arrest and settled in Pondicherry, then a French possession, and continued the publication of *India* for two years.

Bharati bade good bye to Pondicherry in 1918 and after a year reached Madras in 1919 and slipped into eternity, before he could complete his thirty-ninth year, on September 11-12, 1921. Alexander lived for thirty-three years. Adi Sankara and Swami Vivekananda lived and achieved all only within that span of life. And Bharati too stuck to that rule hinted by the galaxy of all-time greats and left when the flesh was in full bloom though there was much more to be sung about! He sang for and on freedom but left the planet twenty-six long years before it was achieved. That, in brief, is a life of perpetual struggle against imperialism, superstition, social evils, economic oppression and all that had to

### Gopalakrishna Bharati

Madu tinnum pulaiya  
Unakku Margazhi tirunalo?

Jnayam tano nir sollum  
Oy, Nandanare, namma jathikkadukkumo?

Namenna seyvom pulayare, indha  
Bhoomiyililada pudumaiyai kandom

Tillaiivelile kalandu kondal avar

Tirumbiyum varuvaro!

be fought against. His life is the most appropriate example for any wise man or woman to draw inspiration from and follow, quite in keeping with what Vivekananda said :

Arise! Awake! Onward! I only tell you this, that whoever sings my songs will imbibe my spirit! Have faith! Onward!

(Words underlined substituted for 'reads my letter'.)

It has been true. There is no substitute to the eloquent songs of Bharati on patriotism or any other subject in lyric, prosody, presentation and style, selection of themes and music. They appeal to the mind and heart, to the young and old and in short, to everyone who listens and has honest aspiration, ambition, aptitude and way of life. The songs had inspired and spurred millions in villages and towns to action for nearly eight decades and shall continue to do so since they are not time-bound in relevance and application. This was the view expressed in the Legislative Assembly of Madras when the British government banned some of his songs in pre-Independence days.

### Two Bharatis

It is remarkable that Subramanya Bharati had drawn inspiration from the songs of Gopalakrishna Bharati who died just a year before he was born when the epic drama, *Nandanar* was the rage in villages and towns, in dramas and concerts. If Gandhiji drew inspiration on seeing the drama on Harischandra while young, surely Subramanya Bharati should have seen *Nandanar* and fuelled his burning innate genius. **The fact that this had not been recorded by any is immaterial since his songs eloquently reveal and testify the same beyond any doubt.**

### Subramanya Bharti

Thondu seyyum adimai  
Unakku Sudandiram ninaivoda?

Oy, Tilakare, namma jathikkadukkumo  
Seyvadu sariyo, sollum

Namenna seyvom thunaivare, indha  
Bhoomiyililada pudumaiyai kandom.

Vira sudandiram vendi nindrar avar  
verondrum kolvar

And many more. Hindu philosophy says that soul is immortal and so could not it be said that the soul that cast away the body of Gopalakrishna Bharati at Anandatandavapuram in Tanjavur district in 1881 travelled to Ettayapuram and took over the body of Subramanya Bharati in 1882! It should be so. Both were eminent scholars and poets, were imbued with fervour to fight against injustice, were poor and have left a legacy that is imperishable. Gopalakrishna Bharati did not sing on patriotism since the torch of freedom struggle had not been lit during his time. He died four years before the Indian National Congress was conceived on the sands of Marina.

### Aggressive Frame, Affectionate Heart

Subramanya Bharati is normally taken as an aggressive freedom fighter and it is true. But that aggressive frame housed a heart full of love, affection, pity and sympathy that melted like butter instantaneously. He was shocked at the condition of those working in sugarcane farms (*Karumbu thottattile*) and shed tears at their fate. When he thought of the steep fall in the condition of brave Maravas, he lamented that it had lost its pride in self-respect and primacy in fighting with swords and bows (*Val valiyum vel valiyum poche*). He could not comprehend the peevish, slavish depravity, lack of moral compunction of those cringing before the foreign employers and lashed out at them in the crisp and enchanting song *Nadippu Swadesigal* (pseudo natives)

Dear, these people have neither  
courage in hearts nor faith in capability. They  
boast aloud; but are mere fighters with words!  
Can impotent people taste real joy? Eyes, two  
numbers they have but vision they lack. What is  
the use of talking of them?

And so, he gives vent to his natural anger and profound sorrow spinning quite a lot of fact on the miserable conduct of people. It is a long list of social and moral degradation he highlights in another song, *Nenju porukkudillaye, indha nilai ketta manidarai ninaittuvittal* (I could not contain my emotions or bear with them when I happen to be reminded of this depraved lot) Such songs are many.

Bharati has held the highest respect to men of scholarship, courage and eminence. Thus he has praise for the scholarly saint, Tayumanavar, for his immortal songs on this life and thereafter. He goes rightly delirious in praise of Sister Nivedita -

Thou art *neivedya* to grace, a temple of love,  
the sun enlightening and destroying darkness in  
mind, etc.

That Bharati was religious and spiritual is seen in many songs. What he hated were superstition, wasteful practices, false conduct in the name of religion Singing on Abhedananda, he hails him for his colossal erudition and scholarship in Vedas and Upanishads and such songs reveal Bharati's own rare scholarship in spiritual matters and his absolute beliefs. The bard assures that Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. U. Ve. Swaminatha Ayyar, the doyen and grand old man of Tamil scholars has become immortal for his monumental contribution to Tamil literature that is unmatched and would remain so far all times.

*Sangita Sampradaya Pradarsini* is the first-ever thesaurus in Classical Carnatic Music authored by scholar-musicologist, Subbarama Dikshitar, a scion of the scholarly Dikshitar family. It was published in 1904 at Ettayapuram and Dikshitar lived between 1839-1906. Young Subramanya Bharati had evidently a very close look at him, admired his work and respected his eminence. In his threnody on Dikshitar, one finds the total admiration of Bharati and unbound sorrow.

Thou wert the perennial fountain of Swaras,  
a Vibhishana among Asuras, the lotus amidst slush  
Born in a highly respected family by the grace of  
Narada.....

He grows eloquent as if he was giving an oration and adds :

With Karna, charity was chased out,  
With Kambar, lyric left our shores;  
With Partha, valour had vanished; and  
With Subbarama, music with all its Raga treasures  
disappeared!

He laments with pathos, 'What sin have we committed; when shall we see the like of him?' There is in fact a mini Archana too to Subbarama Dikshitar, which he richly deserved.

### Noblest Musical Soul

Bharati gave songs for the Freedom Movement, for celebrations in Free India, for a Hundred Years plan for Economic Resurgence and Development, for social uplift and above all, as is rarely known, on Hindu philosophy. He had extensively dealt with the Lakshanas of Carnatic music. He was a super master in composition; his lyric is felicitous, appealing and charming. His songs can be sung in many Ragas. Film and concert music and the dance world have reaped rich harvest by using his songs for the last several decades. The world is still to appreciate him adequately and the musical world has still a treasure-house of songs in his compositions to indent on. In fact, he has proved himself one of the most glorious lives of Bharat. He was sincere to his friends, was steadfast to his principles and gave music its first taste of the lives and aspirations, trials and tribulations of the common man for whom the candidates for elections shed copious uncommon tears! He was an institution himself, a university and above all a noblest musical soul. His approach to the economic field out-reached all the 'isms' the world knows of. A great patriot, his vision was large, conception deep and delivery immaculately appealing.

More. Bharati is a philosopher incarnate. The revolutionary opens an effulgent page in his

unique life and in the footsteps of Sage Sankaracharya cries out :

Sami ni Sami ni, kadavul ni ye  
Tatvamasi, Tatvamasi, Niye ahdam.

(You are God, You are God, Your are God.  
That Thou Art, That Thou Art; You are  
That)

Poyyum meyyum Sivanada  
Engum Sivanai Kanada.  
Saktigal yavum aduve..

Tonri alivadu valkkai - idil  
Tunbattinbam verumai enrodum  
Munril edu varumenum - kali  
Mulgi nadattal Parasiva Mukti

Bharati, the genius, presents himself as a Vedantic scholar *par excellence* pouring out the Mahavakya from *Chandogya Upanishad* etc., in his songs. What is 'I'? Aham Brhmasi, answer the Upanishads. Bharati repeats it in 'Yan' meaning 'I';

*Brhmame Yanenap pesuvar, pesuha!*  
*Brhmame Yanenap pesinar periyor!*

(I am Brahma declared the enlightened.  
So, speak in that strain.)

.....Bharati was a 'realised' soul which lit up effulgent sparks of patriotism, social consciousness, economic advancement, and everything else that go to make 'Man' not only a 'human' but also 'God'!

'Garland' N. Rajagopalan.

SHANMUKHA

Wishes Its Contributors, Readers & Advertisers

A

Very Happy New Year & Pongal

From the Archives

## NAMMALWAR THE MYSTIC

By K. S. Venkataraman

(Tyagaraja was part of the great 'Bhakti' tradition of South India which started in the 14th Century A.D. The Alwars who preceded him were the first Bhakti saints of the South who sang praises of the Lord. The work of Nammalwar is thus of immense interest as an introduction to Tyagaraja.)

Man is no finished and finated clod untroubled by a spark. In him there is a divine unrest which spurs him on to pierce the veil of mystery. Men of heroic mould voyage through strange seas of thought above and pursue knowledge beyond the utmost bounds of human imagination.

It is easy to drift down the primrose path of dalliance, but to battle one's way to the hidden source of life is well-nigh impossible. With the mystics and saints it is all a journey within. They close the doors of the senses and conduct experiments in the laboratory of their own soul. They do not reach truth through the laborious process of reasoning; it dawns on them all of a sudden. Their intuitive perception is not opposed to reason in its exalted mood.

### A "Free Man"

The Alwars and Nayanmars are god-intoxicated men, and their mystical experiences are enshrined in their immortal songs. However one must remember that they are not the monopoly of one race or clime. As Emerson puts it "He that is once admitted to the right of reason is made a free man of the whole estate." What Plato has thought he may think; what a saint has felt he may feel; what at any time has befallen any man he can understand.

A period ranging from the 4th Century to the 9th Century A.D. is indeed a glorious period in the history of our devotional literature the like of which the world is yet to see. In its range of thought and depth of feeling, in its sheer poetic beauty and charm it remains unsurpassed in the domain of mystical utterances.

As the Alwars are soaked in and saturated with the Sangam classics one cannot but infer that these saints must have come after the age of the classics which deal with war and love. Their poetie traditions and moulds have been pressed into service for expressing new patterns of thought and feelings. The Alwars have but poured off the rich wine of their mystical experiences into old bottles.

The warring instinct in man can never be effaced; it may find a new channel. The war without has become a war within; and the Alwars had to contend with the giant-mutinuous passions that raged within. They passed through the valley of the shadow of death; and the travail of their spirit has found expression in many a tear-compelling song. Human love has been transfigured into a divine one. God becomes the eternal bridegroom to an equally eternal bride of a soul.

### A Master-Spirit

The jewel among the twelve Alwars is Nammalwar whose songs are considered to be luminous living commentaries on the secrets of the Vedas. He was born about the later half of the 8th Century A.D. in Alwarthirunagari, a village which adorns the lovely banks of Tamrabarani that winds through Tirunelveli. He belonged to the last rung of the ladder of the four-fold caste-system; but Madurakavi, a Brahmin has found in him the choice and master-spirit of all the ages to come. His glowing tribute to him reveals in an abundant measure his towering personality. Nammalwar's lofty spiritual experiences have moulded the mind of Ramanuja, the compassionate one and his

immanent transcendental idealism is the well undefiled of Vaishnava philosophical school of thought.

Nammalwar considered himself a master-singer in the Court of the Lord; and it is through him that he sings the glories of His own creation. God needs us much more than we need him; and this concept has been embodied in Thomson's "Hound of Heaven". The God-given talent of poetry should not be prostituted, and the muse's flame ought not to be kindled at the shrine of luxury and pride.

Man's emancipation lies in laying the axe at the root of "thou" and "thine" and absolute self-surrender is the only gateway to the shrine of the Maker. Every moment of his life bears the signet of eternity, and he beholds the hand of the divine in every phenomenon of the world. In the ceaseless patter of the rains, in the distant moan of the sea, in loud thunder and quick flashes of lightning he finds the voice and form of his Maker. In a heaven-sent moment, Nammalwar sings in the following strain :

*"I am the smiling land that stretches  
before me;  
I am the hills that soar;  
I am the sea that chafes against the  
shore;  
I am the blue vault of the  
laughing sky above."*

In another song he has striven to establish the Kingdom of God on earth, and in a bold authentic voice proclaims his message :

*"It is death that is dead; and his  
dark reign is over;  
Oh ye, sons of the immortals, come  
out and rear  
the fabric of a new heaven and  
earth on the everlasting  
bed-rock of love."*

No other message is so vastly assuring and so robustly optimistic as the utterance of Nammalwar who sounds the trumpet of a new prophecy. It is the privilege of the earth-born to aspire unto the Kingdom of Heaven.

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## From 'Sadir' To Bharata Natyam

### - A Nostalgia

By 'Natyacharya' T. K. Mahalingam Pillai

Seventyfive years ago I had seen the art of 'Sadir' at temples. The art of dance, respected and venerated as divine, was then offered to deities as a form of worship. Its divinity could be experienced especially when it was offered as part of daily rituals in Sandhya (evening) puja and during festivals such as Brahmotsavam.

I was eight years old then. I remember the Brahmotsavam being celebrated every March at the Shiva Temple. The deities were Lord Jatapureswarar and consort Marusalakshi Thayar at Tirumalairayanpattinam (my birth place). The town was then under the French rule. But temple rituals and festivals were conducted without any hindrance or interference. Brahmotsavam was an eagerly awaited event, celebrated with much devotion and reverence.

During the Sandhya Puja, the senior Devadasi captured in Abhinaya the ritual of Shodashopachara offered to the deities. The visualisation in gesture language was done to the accompaniment of instrumental music, Maddalam and Cymbals (Nattuva Talam). And at Deeparadhana Nagaswaram was played.

#### Sadir

The 'offerings' transcended to a rich experience during festivals with full-fledged concerts of Nagaswaram, Sadir, Vocal, Veena, Flute taking place. The Nagaswaram concert was called 'Peria Melam' and 'Sadir' came to be known as 'Chinna Melam'. The rest were music concerts.

'Sadir'. The name came to be attributed to dance as it was presented at the 'Sadas' - assembly. Well-known Devadasis, specially trained in the art made an Arpanam (offering) of it to the Lord. And presenting during festivals the

Sthala Puranas of the respective temples in dance-drama form made it not only an entertaining art but also an education on Sthalas (places) and various stories woven around them. There evolved thus "Kuravanji" Natya Natakas. *Kutralakkuravanji, Kumbesar Kuravanji, Kunnakudi Kuravanji, Vralimalai Kurvanji, Tiruvarur Tyagesar Kuravanji, Tiruvidaimarudur Madhyarjuna Kuravanji* are some of the prominent Natya Natakas presented in those times. (Lyrics of some of the Kuravanjis, especially that of *Madhyarjuna Kuravanji* are not traceable). The Sadir and other concerts took place at the Prakaram in specially erected Pandals and at Kalyana Mantapam.

The grand procession of the deities round the four streets called "Mada Veedis" to the accompaniment of Periya Melam (Nagaswaram), Veda Ghosha, *Tevara - Tiruvachaka* Pann rendition was another significant feature of festival times. As the procession reached the north-east side the Chinna Melam took over with Devadasis and Nattuvanar rendering the *Tevaram, Tiruvachakam* composed on the deities. Accompanied by Mukhavina, Maddalam, Sruti and Nattuvatalam, the rendition continued till they reached the temple premises. After entering the temple, they performed what was known as "Thattu Chutral" and Pradakshina in which elephant was also included before the deities were taken out from Vahanas. The whole atmosphere was surcharged with Bhakti and artistes gave out their best in utter surrender to the Lord.

The commencement of Brahmotsavam was always marked with the auspicious "Kodiyetram" (flag hoisting *Dwajaroohanam*). And when the deity came round the Prakaram, Navasandhi Kavuthvam was performed by the Devadasis, propitiating Ashta Dik Devatas such as Indra, Agni, Yama, Nairuti, Varuna, Vayu,

Kubera and Esanya with Brahma at centre to the accompaniment of Veda Ghosha and music. Such was the sanctimonious status given to dance then.

It is indisputable that owing to the sanctity attached to Sadir and the reverence with which it was practised, preserved and propagated by the Nattuvanars and Devadasis who dedicated it as 'Devarpanam' that the art has come a long way down the centuries and spread over the world with a new sheen christened as Bharata Natyam, encapsulating Bhava-Raga-Tala.

### Sadir "Deivika Chinmam"

Digressing a bit, let me probe the concept of 'Peria Melam' and 'Chinna Melam'. I have been intrigued since childhood why Nagaswara concert was called 'Peria Melam' and Sadir 'Chinna Melam'. Was it because of the size and tone of the instruments played? But why Chinna Melam for dance where Devadasi was the prime performer? It was not until 1948 that some light was thrown on it at the Natyakala conference convened by connoisseur-Advocate Sarangapani at Museum Theatre, Egmore, Madras where all Nattuvanars and Vidwans participated. The conference, aimed at promoting and propagating the art of Bharata Natyam, comprised sessions of discussions in the morning and performances in the evening. Stalwarts of the day like E. Krishna Iyer, Prof. Sambamoorthy, Tiruvizhimizhalai Subramania Pillai and brother, Pandanallur Chokkalingam Pillai, Muthiah Pillai, Subbarayan Pillai, Vazhuvur Ramaiah Pillai, my father T. P. Kuppiah Pillai and many other Vidwans participated. That year the question of 'Chinna Melam' came for examination. A probable explanation was given by Vazhuvur Ramaiah Pillai. He said since Natyam is "Deivika Chinmam" - a divine 'symbol', and offered as a divine 'Arpanam', it might have been referred to as "Chinna Melam. And this, the Deivika 'Chinna' Melam, might have in course of time come to be called just 'Chinna Melam'. In Tirunelveli district Peria Melam was called 'Raja Melam' and 'Deva Melam'. This explanation

appeared more plausible to Vasudeva Sastri, a renowned scholar - archivist of Tanjore Saraswathi Mahal Library. E. Krishna Iyer, the crusader for dance renaissance, endorsed it and the rest accepted it.

### Gandharva Melam

In this context, I would like to make a note of what was called "Gandharva Melam". Legend has it that in the Devendra Loka, dancers Ramba, Tilottama, Menaka and Urvashi used to perform to the Nattuvangam of Maharaja Chitrangada. It is well-known from many compositions that when Lord Shiva and Parashakti danced Nandi provided Maddalam, Narada played Yazh, Brahma kept Talam and Vishnu played the flute. But the celestial dancers, Ramba and others were accompanied by the Gandharvas. Hence the name 'Gandharva Melam'.

Such 'Deivika Chinna Melam' had many well-versed exponents, prominent among whom was erudite performer, Devadasi Tiruvarur Gnanaththammal. She was versatile and proficient in languages - Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu - and the arts of music and dance. The other eminent dancers who dedicated their lives to the art and the deity were Kumbakonam Bhanumathy, Varalakshmi sisters, Tiruvalaputhur Kalyani's daughters - Rajalakshmi sisters, Pandanallur Jayalakshmi etc.

They wore "Thuyya Selai" (saree made of soft material) and an upper garment ("Angi") signifying purity; and their jewellery consisted of what is known as 'temple jewellery' - head ornaments, Kasumalai, Oddiyam (belt) and Chalangai (anklets). The orchestra comprising Nattuvanar, Vocalist, Mridangist, Mukha Vina and Sruthi was mobile following the dancer. It was mikeless age and performance was in temple Prakaram. In the din of the crowd it was difficult for the dancer to have feed back of music.

### Streamlined 'Margam'

As times changed dance performances

were extended to royal courts and wedding halls. Nattuvanars like Kandappa Nattuvanar (Balasaraswathy's Guru), Ellappa Pillai propagated the art. Exponents mentioned earlier were featured. And repertoire too was stretched from Sthala Purana-based Sampradayic Natya Natakas to solos with compositions dedicated to deities as well as royal patrons. The compositions were mostly in Telugu as the patron kings, Nayaks of Tanjore, got Vidwans from Vijayanagar to compose pieces for dance and naturally these were in Telugu.

After the advent of the Trinity who too composed in Telugu and Sanskrit, came the Tanjore Quartet (Chinnayya, Ponnaiah, Sivanandam and Vadivel), the disciples of Muthuswamy Dikshitar. They made history in the fields of music and dance - devising for the first time a Margam for a Sadir Cutcheri, comprising Alarippu, Jatiswaram, Sabdam, Varnam/Swarajati, Padam, Javali, Tillana in that order and composed pieces for these. The Margam format is followed even today. Most of them are again in Telugu, *Samini Rammanave* (Khamas), *Dhanike* (Todi), *Manavi* (Sankarabharanam) are a few popular Varnams for instance, in praise of the Lord, the royal patron etc.

### Bharata Natyam

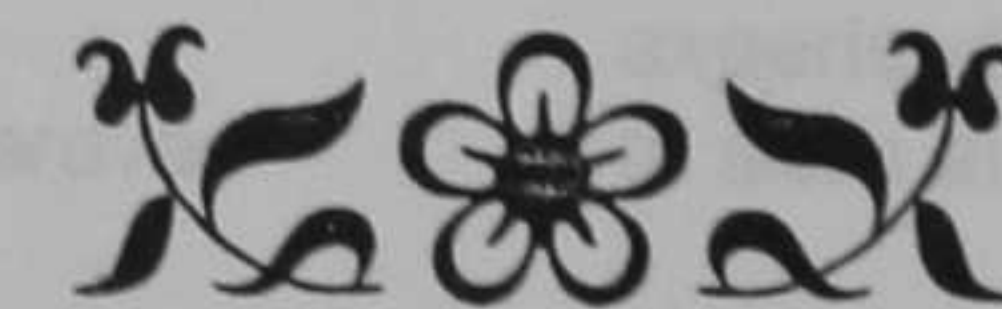
There was a lull during the early quarter of last century. In spite of its sustained development for centuries, the art fell into disrepute and came to be looked down upon "as social evil" by "misinformed and misguided reformers under Western influence." The deterioration of the Devadasi class also to an extent contributed to the decline of the art. The anti-nautch movement almost spelt doom to the performing arts. Thanks to the will and untiring

efforts of a couple of Natyacharya families with an unbroken lineage and that of crusader E. Krishna Iyer, together with Rukmini Arundale who founded the Kalakshetra at Adyar, Madras, the phase of renaissance successfully cleared the performing scene of the muck and maze. Re-emerged the art of dance with a more dignified name, "Bharata Natyam", drawn from Bharata's *Natya Sastra* and Nandikeswara's *Abhinaya Darpana*, and connoting Bhava-Raga-Tala.

Bharata Natyam was presented on public platforms with respectability. That Kalakshetra was a milestone in the history of Bharata Natyam goes without saying and with 'Baby' Kamala playing a role model, many families came forward to train their children in the art. The costumes, jewellery were made more dignified and tasteful. The Margam set by the Tanjore Quartet was fully employed. Besides additions of Tamil compositions from Pasurams, Arunachala Kavi's *Rama Nataka* Keerthanas, and those of Gopalakrishna Bharati, Vedanayakam Pillai, Muthu Tandavar enriched the repertoire.

For the past thirty years, Sampradaya Natya is being presented at temples, especially during festivals. The Shivaratri Mahotsav at the temple of Lord Nataraja at Chidambaram is noteworthy. Natyanjali is offered at the specially erected Pandal in the Prakaram. Not only Bharata Natyam, but also Kathak, Kuchipudi, Mohini Attam, Odissi are presented. Similar Natya festivals are held in Perur, Sirkazhi. Nearer home at Satara, known as Uttara Chidambaram, dance recitals, Arangetrams are organised every month at the Nataraja Sannidhi.

Whatever be the trends and innovations, temple tradition of Natyanjali continues.



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## Karnatic Music - Close to Heart, Close to Life

(The Presidential Address delivered by Shri T. K. Govinda Rao at the 73rd Conference of The Music Academy, Madras, on his being conferred the "Sangita Kalanidhi" for 1999.)

I consider it, a great privilege to have been invited to preside over the 73rd *Sangita Vidwat Sadas* of the Music Academy. I am grateful for the honour bestowed on me.

I think it is also very appropriate that H. H. Marthanda Varma is here today because, as a family they have not only been patrons of Art and Music, but also represent a cultured, knowledgeable and pioneering heritage so much so that families like mine, I am proud to say, made Kerala their home for a few generations. As for the Royal family's love of Karnatic music, the Maharaja is no exception as he has himself scripted and compiled in English the contents of the *Kritis* of Swati Tirunal, a contribution I find to be very useful in my current project on the complete works of Swati Tirunal. Therefore, I see in his presence, in addition to a homely environment, something of a divine consent.

I have looked at today's event this way. We are at the threshold of the next millennium. Looking back at the era gone by, three great institutions can be singled out, in my opinion, for their services to the cause of Karnatic Music. In a chronological order, they are **Sri Musiri Subramania Iyer, The Music Academy and the All India Radio**. It is through God's grace that I came to be associated closely with all these three, in the same order. They have, in no small measure, been responsible for what I am today. In addition, it is my humble submission that this honour is also more of recognition of what is aptly captured in the lines of the famous *Kural* of Tiruvalluvar :

*Thakkar Tagavilar Enbadu Avaravar  
Echchattaal Kaanappadam.*

Simply stated it means this : Whether men have merit or not will be seen from what they have left behind as their legacy.

Therefore, I take this opportunity to recall with reverence, in this elite forum, my guru **Sri Musiri Subramanya Iyer** and extol his contribution and legacy to the world of Karnatic music. This being his centenary year, it is appropriate that whatever I wish to say here begins with him.

After my *Vidwan* title from the Music College in 1949, my *gurukula vasa* with Musiri Subramanya Iyer lasted for 15 years. For the first few years there was no formal teaching session. I was asked to observe and just listen. I used to practise this in privacy as and when I got some time amidst other household chores. In the process, I learnt, slowly, to move away from *Lakshana*-oriented singing style and concentrate on *Sahitya Bhava*. Here lies the subtle way in which my guru indicated to me which way the priorities lay. Let me explain this.

As you all know, Karnatic music is composition-oriented. It is a deliberately chosen route, because that is proved to be the only way it can reach people and stay with them. We see today how successful this composition - based approach turned out to be. The average *Rasika* of Karnatic music identifies any *Raga* by recollecting and comparing it with popular compositions that sound similar. This is done without any familiarity with *Swara* - based *Raga* structure and as easily as a fish takes to water. His only source of reference is his listening experience. No other system of music can boast of such an audience friendly route.

It seems quite a simple task when stated this way. But much effort has gone behind to



achieve this. On one side was Veda Puranagama Sastropanishad, the quintessence of the message that needed to be carried. On the other side, was the heritage of Purva Prasiddha Ragas, Ragas that, though few in number, were developed, polished and seasoned over the centuries to aesthetic perfection so that they became vehicles of human emotions or Bhavas. Great composers like Tyagaraja chose simple words, that are also precise and had an emotional appeal. They wove them into compositions, blending them, in the process, in perfect harmony with Purva Prasiddha Ragas. It was not merely an exercise of scripting structured notes, conforming to scales just to please the ear and the intellect. Therefore instead of a mere enunciation, it became an experience that enveloped body and soul into total appeal. It remains so to this day. To lose sight of this Bhava-laden aspect is ignoring the very vital sign that gives life to Karnatic music.

The tradition of *gurukula vasa* has now given way to institutionalized method of teaching. There are music schools, colleges and Universities where a structured format is employed scientifically and successfully to train students to attain optimal levels of competency. Access to knowledge through organized exposure, pupil-friendly environment and a convenient, flexible pace of learning have become a reality today. But the approach remains grammar-laden where the accent is on musicality. The result is the evolution of technically near-perfect and competent young musicians who are growing in numbers. I admire their competence, great care and dedication, which together have raised the standard of music to levels higher than ever before.

But the vehicle of Karnatic music has to move on the wheels of Sahitya as it had always done in the past, to continue to retain objectivity. Music needs more than the scale that defines a Raga, because beyond the groups of Sancharas the scale is capable of, it needs to attain its full, soul-inspiring form. This is possible only when the *Raga and Sahitya Bhava* blend harmoniously.

These two should not be segregated in compartments. Therefore, my advice to the new generation of musicians is that in the process of singing, they should not lose sight of the *Sahityabhava*, an advice, I am sure, my guru would have strongly endorsed, as he did during his lifetime.

It is like this. When you show a client a house for occupation, we should always remember that what he is looking for is a home. So when you attempt to convince him, some talk of the quality and care taken in construction will be acceptable but what he is actually looking for is your help to enable him to visualize the house as a home, accommodating his personal effects and preferences, by simulating the experience. Like-wise, the nectar of *Sahitya* with all the *Bhava* is a simulated experience that has been made available to us through the immortal compositions of the Trinity and other great composers.

Therefore where is the need again to churn the ocean of music? We are neither *Devas* nor *Asuras*, but mere mortals. Still we have one immortal possession, a rare treasure in the form of creations in Karnatic music, which we need to pass on from one generation to another. In this mission, let us do it the way it was handed over to us, preserving its form and content. This is my humble request to all those who shoulder this responsibility.

While I state this I have in mind the vocalist who is tempted to employ Sangathis some of which are more suitable to instruments. Instruments have features and flexibility to play the desired range. Profiling a Raga with all its nuances by capturing all beautiful combination of notes may be an aesthetic experience and intellectually appealing. But I can tell you this fare will find favour only with a few, as it is bereft of the emotional content of universal appeal that only a good *Sahitya* is capable of imparting. *Sahitya* makes music meaningful, close to heart and therefore close to life. If music has to remain as a form of art, it has to remain close to life.

It is this balance and equity that makes it easier for our musicians to grasp the essentials of other systems of music and even to become proficient in them. It does not seem to happen the other way round. This is because, in my view, from the heights Karnatic music has taken us to, any other system is only a descent.

Another beauty of the compositions in Karnatic music is their simplicity that enhances their impact. I recollect a renowned sage and philosopher, who was present during the release of one of my books on music, saying "colloquialism plays a great role in our music". I think it is a valid observation. Sri Tyagaraja's Kritis stand testimony to this. The emphasis here is on moods and emotions. Therefore, there is a need to understand the language. Simple and familiar words ensure listener's total involvement. For example, hearing "*Sri Subramanyaya namaste*" when compared with "*Thruvadi saranamendringu nan nambi vanden*" or "*aduttu vanda ennai tallalagadu*" may not yield the same emotional experience, though both are in the Raga Kambhoji. Our feelings while singing or in response while listening to these two pieces are likely to be very different. Dikshitar's Kritis give rise to *Vaicarikam*, a feeling of intellectual approach with attendant technical embellishment, while in Gopalakrishna Bharati's Kritis one can feel the *Vaicarikam*, full of emotion and *Saranagati Bhava*.

We know about the existence of 72 Melams, which are musical scales identified for convenient codification of Ragas. Some of which are ancient. Ragas like Todi and Bhairavi are thousands of years old while Ragas like Dhenuka are relatively recent. In fact Kiravani and Gowri manohari were evolved only after the advent of the Melakarta system.

Development of music is in no way restricted by these identity codes which are like genetic codes in live cells. The genes themselves do not fully describe a living being. Likewise, the musical scales only distinguish the Ragas, but do not by themselves give the range and

nuances, unless we treat them with appropriate sancharas like *Vakra Varja Alpatva Bahutva Vadi Samvaditva*, with judicious and subtle blend of any *Swara* as and when necessary to enhance their potency and impact.

Great composers and successive generations of versatile musicians went about this responsibility with great care. They brought about form and substance to various Ragas by nourishing and developing them. In the process they developed distinctive styles, constantly innovating and improvising, adding flavour and fragrance to their presentations. There was, however, one common denominator - commitment to music through continuous practice and performance.

As with our predecessors, creativity - *Kalpanasakti* continues to be our goal. In my view, this is an exercise in depth. To attain this skill, for instance, in a chosen Raga, one should listen and learn as many compositions as possible of different composers in the same Raga. This facilitates assimilation of the most essential as well as other possible dimensions of the Raga. Over a period of time, such person, through constant practice can create and innovate without much effort, as easily as breathing. Sri Tyagaraja himself has recorded this in the Todi Raga Kritis '*Kaddanu Variki*'.

After abandoning sleep, thus remaining awake, holding *Tambura* comfortably to maintain the basic drone-*Adhara Sruti*, and strictly adhering to it, devoid of mental reservations, thus staying open to new ideas, with the intention of being melodious. ("*Niddura nirankarinci, muddugatambura batti, Suddhamaina manasusce, susvaramuto*".)

This Sangita Gnana becomes an attainable goal through preparation of mind-an open and receptive mind, active, listening and constant practice. Purva Prasiddha Ragas abound in most of the compositions of our great composers. Through diligent practice, what begins as an

awareness, blossoms into a deep understanding and appreciation of the sublime blend of the Raga and the Sahitya. This involvement and experience do get reflected in the musician's efforts, in greater dimensions over a period of time, adding grace and maturity. This is what an audience looks forward to, involvement and a vicarious share in the Nada-Yoga.

No cultural heritage can be preserved unless crucial aspects are recorded for posterity. In fact, it was Tiger Varadachariar who dwelt on this in his presidential address as far back as 1936. From time to time renowned musicians and musicologists have brought out various publications documenting Karnatic music. To sustain this effort, I have done some work, in a small way, by bringing out, in separate volumes, compositions of the Trinity in diacritical Roman and Devanagri scripts along with meanings and precise notations to facilitate reading and learning, even by those who are not familiar with the original languages. The process of recording as many of them as possible in a traditional format has already commenced.

This is only an effort of small magnitude. I know for a fact that there is another great resource that needs to be constantly sounded on this task. It is the All India Radio. During my association with them, both at Chennai and Delhi, I have come across thousands of unidentified, recorded tapes stored in their custody, waiting for the light of day. Even by any conservative estimate, it is a mammoth task. I did make some headway in removing some cobwebs and organizing spadework, but as the saying goes, 'One swallow does not make a summer'. It is crucial that this need for restoring what is our right share in the national arena is recognized and given a big push.

There is also a need to set the record straight when it comes to Karnatic music. Whenever we stake claims for the right place for Karnatic music based on its heritage and the merit of its current talent, what we perceive in the response at the national level is not very

encouraging. This can partly be corrected if our media dedicates some space and time on an ongoing basis to classical music based activities, like it does for any day-to-day event, instead of slotting it only for weekends and seasons. I also appeal to all media personnel in South India to reflect on whether the current low key treatment to our music features in the media when compared to films and light music is justified.

Now that the autonomous Prasar Bharati has come into being, it is high time that the Advisory Board set up is expanded to include a few professionals and connoisseurs of Karnatic music, in addition to bringing about greater transparency in their policies and practices. In this very hall, I see quite a few who are eminently fit for nomination. I raise this issue because I think this is the right forum to blow the proverbial conch.

I also wish to thank and compliment the Rasikas in the audience whose approval is the final reward for any musician. By upholding all that has merit and discarding all that lack appeal, you, Rasikas, provide the continuity factor. Among the foremost of this community was Sri T. T. Krishnamachari, whose centenary is also being celebrated this year. To commemorate his patronage and vision we have, today, this auditorium, that ensures December season's climate right through the year. Ultimately it is the collective will and patronage of such stalwarts, sustained to this day, that egg us on to strive for excellence.

Drawing inspiration on that note, I request my fellow Vidwans and members of the Expert Committee to attend all the morning sessions so that our deliberations are fully enriched by their contribution.

Finally, as reverential memories of my Guru Sri Musiri Subramanya Iyer keep flooding me, I thank, once again, the Music Academy and all those present here for the honour bestowed on me and also for this rare opportunity that has enabled me to share my thoughts with you.

## Divine Karnatic Music - Do Present Trends Move in the Right Direction ?

Music in all its glory and divinity is considered a gift from God. In the olden days, only the talented and sincere youngsters who wanted to make music their means of living ventured into this arena. Training for them was not merely taking a book and pen and walking over to their guru's home for an hour's session and then returning to their school / college books. They had to live with their gurus, serve them and gather their knowledge of music as and when they were taught. The highly talented were flushed out by the guru and brought out before the music-minded crowd and made famous. Also there was royal patronage where the ruling kings encouraged artists in their courts and bestowed gifts of appreciation on them.

Classical music had its own status. It provided for a sure and safe means of living. Although politics in this field did exist, still the artiste who was given the dais to perform had to prove his/her worth before the discerning audience. One could not force an artiste on the listeners simply because the artiste was influential or rich ! Thus the listeners were guaranteed good music without waste of time. To be a musician was considered prestigious and the artiste was highly respected as he/she was considered as gifted by the Gods above.

Viewed against this background, in modern times, music is no longer considered just divine but highly commercial. The main cause is complete lack of patronage. There are no more royal families to support musicians. There are only sponsors. There are no royal courts but only sabhas in all nooks and corners trying to vie with each other. There are no teachers who can totally devote their time to teaching music as this cannot bring them a stable income. There are no students who would like to make music their profession as there is no future for them in this line. Thus we see that while music is still divine, sincerity and struggle is no longer there. Fame

comes the easy way even if it may last for a short time. Only this fame often comes to the musically untalented but financially powerful.

Who is to be blamed for this shocking reality? The Gurus, the students, the sabhas, the audience, the press or the musicians themselves? If we start analysing each party, we do make some interesting observations based on evidences and revealing certain bare and shocking truths.

**Gurus :** When we study the class of gurus, we come across the following lots of people. The old famous retired musicians, who have rightly taken to imparting their invaluable knowledge to deserving students. However, very few have successfully come out of their gurus' style and established their own style!

The second category of gurus who were good in their profession but not so lucky in conquering the stage, churn out better students who make it to the forefront. These gurus are more sincere as they often feel that though they might not have seen success, at least their music should be kept alive through their students.

The third category comprises gurus who are more enthusiastic about establishing their own presence than teaching music. They try to push their half-baked students onto the stage after teaching them a few compositions with ready-made Alapana and Swaras. The music meted out certainly turns out to be unpalatable. Ultimately it is the music that dies.

**Students :** There are those selective few students who are musically talented and take it up seriously. But many a time they lack either the finance or influence to get even onto the stage. They land up performing in minor functions and ultimately give it up as a bad joke.

Then we have those disinterested students who have been dragged into music by their over-enthusiastic parents. These students also perform under their parents' influence - before their parents and their relatives and are highly appreciated by them. They stay in the limelight so long as their parents continue to be influential. Finally they fade into oblivion with no progress whatsoever.

Finally, we have those countable few who rise to the pedestal. Yet we do not find them maintaining themselves like stalwarts M. S. Subbulakshmi, D. K. Pattamal and others probably because they lack creativity or refrain from excavating further into the musical depths by listening to virtuosi of yester years. They are simply satisfied with their recognition and not interested in improvisations and improvements. They feel they know quite enough to make the fast buck.

**Sabhas :** The sabha people play the major role in presenting new talents. But here again one starts thinking if these organisations do justice? My observations especially in Mumbai are as follows:

In the first place, we have minuscule sabhas, wherein, few self-made organisers are interested in quick money. Through poorly printed out forms, they force parents to become members in return for a small chamber concert for their young ones.

Then we have those medium-sized sabhas which cater to the suburban audience. They are only interested in presenting famous artists invited by the giant sabhas, thus saving on the artistes' travelling and staying expenses. They very rarely risk presenting local talent.

Finally, we have these giant sabhas which feel they should not reduce themselves by presenting any local talents. The excuses given by the organisers for this trend of behaviour is varied but the most common one is - *the audience will not come to hear a local artiste!*

**The Audience :** They alone can preserve our music. But here too we find different categories. We have those old connoisseurs who reverently attend any programme and sit nodding their heads in the front rows, either in appreciation or in a short nap.

Next we have the very - busy category who enter the hall continuously looking at their watches. They pay obeisance to the artiste, thus registering their attendance and rush out of the hall at double the speed at which they entered.

We have then that group who turn the hall into a small meeting place of their own. They busily exchange their homely gossips happily oblivious to the music performance on the stage.

Further, we have the most interesting but most dangerous forum with half knowledge. This group either praises the artiste sky-high because it suits them or buries him / her there and then with their vicious criticisms.

Last but not the least we have those real music-lovers who quietly attend, enjoy and go peacefully. This is the only group which applauds the deserving artiste and encourages with audible '*sabash-sabash*'.

**The Press :** It has always played a major role in the making or unmaking of an artiste. After all '*the pen is mightier than the sword.*' But very rarely do we see critical write-ups about brand new artistes. Often it is the some old known artistes being written about in fanciful language. We do not even have critics attending the programme of a new comer. Add to this sad state of affairs, our local newspapers no longer page music reviews.

**Musicians :** When we study the progressive evolution of musicians from the olden times to the present' we sadly note that the *musicians* themselves have led to the lack of interest and innovative spirit in our music system. Any introduction of new techniques either in vocal rendition or instrumental play, invited only raised

eyebrows and the artiste was accused of gimmickry and playing to the gallery. According to them, anybody who ventured into innovations (even within the framework of the theoretical rules) merely to enhance the beauty of our music was guilty of tarnishing the system. Unfortunately this was not a healthy attitude. It is true that one should not compromise on the purity of classical music but experimentation with a progressive outlook should be supported. The rendition must be such that it is appreciated by the knowledgeable as well as the layman.

Using a contact mike was a taboo, and this forces me to think that if these conservatives were so particular of strict adherence to old traditional system of Trinity days (which actually existed then as there were no technical improvement), they had no right to hear or perform in an auditorium on the mike systems. The venue should have continued to be under a banyan tree and the seatings on the sandy patch of land. No fans or air-conditioners but only an oil lamp and mosquitoes! Also, these so called conservatives should have performed only in our motherland and not ventured abroad, thus breaking the tradition by crossing '*the seven seas*'! Usage of an English instrument like the violin for accompaniment should have been avoided as none of our Trinity used them. A one-string Tanpura would have been appropriate.

Today, we find English instruments like the Guitar, Saxophone, Mandoline, etc., on our classical stage. This is a healthy scene no doubt, but we sadly find our traditional instruments like the Nagaswaram, Veena etc., slowly disappearing from the dais. When we study our Western counterparts, we find that despite their modern innovations, their age-old Piano Lyre, Lute, etc., have not lost their positions to the synthesizers. This is where our traditional spirit should come forward to see that our age-old instruments are encouraged and do not land in the museum. Any experiments on them should be supported so that the interest in them does not die out.

Our present day musicians who give classical music performances, have to sing for film and perform to jazz music too. Here pure classicism does suffer as these artistes have to sing in different pitches for different types of music with the result that they lose their grip over classical music and make it also sound light like any other music. They cannot be blamed since they cannot depend on classical music alone for their livelihood. It is true that even M. S. Subbulakshmi, M. L. Vasanthakumari, Radha Jayalakshmi etc., sang play-back music but then the film songs in those days were classical-oriented and these artistes maintained their normal voice pitch for such recordings. No present day musician can get the support enjoyed then. In fact, today, any music performance has to be sponsored and is no longer any sabha's own presentation.

Having analysed each component that makes a Karnatic music session, in much detail, I would now try to examine what progressive changes may be required to once again usher in the enviable status that our Karnatic music enjoyed in the earlier years and free it from commercialism of the present days.

Looking into the modern world's demands, one should definitely admire the younger generation of musically interested students. They show real zeal for mastering the art despite their academic demands. Much depends on how they are groomed by their parents and gurus.

Gurus must induce a *liking* for the music by teaching seriously and make the session lot more interesting. This should include a vision into the basic practical theory and not mere Varnam / Kirtana training. Also the meanings of each Kirtana should be explained at least in a brief form so that the student can understand the theme of the song and can bring out the Bhava.

Parents must encourage their children to take to music as a divine art and never induce in them a passion for fame and stage performance. Should a child be really talented, the parents

must carefully and quietly shape his/her capacity and nurture it to mature through sincere practice and devotion for the required period of time. They should not put them before the public in their enthusiasm to expose them as child prodigies. This will only stunt the progress and dwarf the overall achievements.

Sabhas must stop categorising musicians as local artistes. In my own experience, I find this obsession especially in our metropolis. When we maintain that music is universal why do we demarcate artistes on regional borders? For example, we find Mumbai artistes performing equally well or even better than those from south! These very same artistes who were shunned as local artistes earlier are given a heartening welcome after having passed the test in Madras music circle. Is it because we locals cannot judge or is it that by performing in Madras the same local artiste with the same amount of music knowledge attains prestige overnight?

Why should Madras people be the judges of our local talents? Why should we belittle our knowledge before them? Music emanates from the individual's heart and not from a geographical unit. Why do we not select our young talents here and send them proudly to Madras instead of looking forward to approval from the south? How true are those sabha people when they call themselves totally dedicated to music and in service of music when actually it is the Madras people who are serving the cause of music by appreciating even our Bombay talents whom we refused to recognise earlier.



As Mumbaitees, why can't we make our Mumbai the 'mecca' of music? We too can have music festivals to churn out competitive local talents. A lively press and thronging listeners can induce an enthusiasm in youngsters, leading to a healthy musical atmosphere. Our local sabhas will become a pedestal for young talents and this will be their real service to music. Our local artistes will flourish here instead of being forced out of their homeland towards the south in search of recognition.

There is no point in telling ourselves that our music will not die and there will be a change of cycle. Whom are we trying to fool? If our system is not fading into oblivion, then why the lack of audience strength, why the absence of press coverage and why the cold-shouldering of artistes? Instead of living in our dreamworld of sheer imagination, it would be better if we came down to reality and started looking up for avenues to strengthen our music lineage. After all, our Karnatic system is pure and needs no cleansing; all it needs is a proper and sincere support from the Rasikas, the sabhas and musicians as a whole.

The audience and critics must come forward and attend any new comer with the same enthusiasm as they come for the known performers. If they find the artiste boring they can walk out. But if they find a worthy talent, they can help encourage. **Then alone will a new artiste be born!**

- Lalitha Arun Bharadwaj

## A Tribute

### The Days with My Guru

Ninth of December, 1999, dawned as any other ordinary day in Chennai, except that the city was getting ready for yet another year of festivities in music and dance. Many Sabhas had already begun and All India Radio was all set to capture and relay the best events on air for Rasikas. The end of "music season" this year would mark the beginning of the millennium year and hence the festivities of 1999 were especially important.

It was another quiet day for Sangeetha Kalanidhi, K. S. Narayanaswamy, who awoke as usual with the transistor by his bedside. His hand would automatically switch on, in a precise pre-programmed way, for the schedules of AIR music broadcasts were part of his system, so to speak. He knew all of today's youngsters, the famous and not so famous. The vocalists and instrumentalists. Though not many of today's young vidwans would know him. Even if they have heard of him, they probably would not know much of his music. Because KSN, as Rasikas affectionately call him, had not performed on stage for several years now. Even when he did, his music was for the true seeker.

There is this element of doubt in today's concert-world scenario, that classical Karnatic music has to be made appealing to the masses. We have to draw crowds to the concert halls, who will purchase tickets, and determine that day's gate collection. The "Rasika" has to be weaned away from the couch in front of the television showing different pop album tunes with new instruments, newer voices, and funnier lyrics and classical Karnaticized tunes. So somehow today's young Vidwan competes directly with the Pop Bhagavathars to get his share of audience. And popularity. And stardom. With the gate-collection, and adulation, and all.

So, our Ragas have to be more "melodious"! Syama Sastri and Tyagaraja have

to appeal to our present-day Rasika. How does a young Vidwan tackle this all-powerful consumer of musical wares? Glitzy packaging? Dilute classical content? Just a little?

Just that much to pull him out of the living room sofa to the concert hall.

K. S. Narayanaswamy had no such doubts. I have had this massive good fortune of having learnt music at the feet of this Great Master of our times.

I certainly do not want to preach that I have learnt all that is to be learnt, or pretend that I am totally unaffected by the transition Kamatic music is today facing. I just want to share with my friends what I have heard from my Guru. What he has told me innumerable times. Truths of Raga Alapana, Rules of Swara prasthara, the secret of melody in our music, the beauty of rhythm, guidelines to recognize intelligence in music, because that is surely the only way to develop our own.

### Raga - A Separate, Distinct Entity

Raga, in Karnatic music is not a mere cluster of notes. It is a combination of certain notes, in a certain particular order. The most important catch is yet to come. This particular combination of notes defines "movements" or oscillations of notes, which is very commonly known as "Gamakas" in Karnatic music. These Gamakas lend "character" or "personality" to our Ragas. Thus, Sankarabharanam follows a particular Gamaka pattern, which has to be strictly, unfailingly, adhered to everytime one renders the Raga for the Raga to come out with aesthetic beauty. Rendering only the Swaras of Sankarabharanam without its corresponding Gamakas will not make the Raga. One may at best consider it some tune using the Swaras of Sankarabharanam.

## Gamaka Guidelines in a Nutshell

1. Shadja, Panchama are two Swaras which, in any Raga, will always remain stable. They are never to be rendered with a 'shake'.
2. In addition to Shadja and Panchama being stable one Swara in Purvanga or one Swara in Uttaranga or one Swara both in Purvanga and Uttaranga shall remain stable. This is an important rule because; the notes remaining stable determine the range and extent of Gamakas of the remaining notes.
3. When two swaras are sounded next to each other, only one of them shall have Gamaka, and the other shall remain stable. In Chatusruti Ri, Sadharana Ga combination, Chatusrukhti Ri shall always remain stable, as in Bhairavi, Karaharapriya Consider Antara Ga and Suddha Ma combination. In Sankarabharanam, Antara Ga remains stable, while Ma oscillates. For the same set of Swaras Nadanamakriya has Gamaka for Ga while Ma remains stable.
4. It would be interesting to work out the difference between Kalyani and Sankarabharanam, not by the difference in madhyama, but by analysing the difference in Gamaka structures. If a student attempts to render Kalyani by changing Suddha Ma of Shankarabharanam to Prati Madhyama, the result would be clearly disastrous.

## Raga has Rhythm

Raga Alapana has a close relationship with the composition that is to follow. Though Alapana has no Tala accompaniment, the Sancharas have a rhythm, which is in consonance with the composition that follows. The Madhyama Kala passages in an Alapana should be of uniform rhythm, reminding one of a string of pearls. The four aspects of Alapana-Chowka Kala (slow tempo) passages, Madhyama Kala (fast tempo) passages, Kaarvai (long, resting notes), and lastly the silent gaps between phrases should be uniformly spread through the length of the Alapana giving a picture of repose, tranquillity and grace. A student has to develop the ability to assimilate the Raga character and use her own dexterity, to weave the fabric of music with such finely collected threads.

## Tanam - A Shower of Rose Petals

Tanam is a very attractive, important part of Veena music, Attractive because it makes use of three Tala strings between notes which is very pleasing to the ear, Important, because it brings out groupings of Swaras in patterns of twos, threes and fives which is exactly how the Swaras are grouped in our Tana Varnams (which is why they are so named). A student has to be strong about his Raga Sancharas; otherwise they cannot be broken down in systematic Swara groupings. If the Swaras are not grouped with the discipline prescribed by our Tana Varnams, the structure of Tanam is lost. It will resemble a cross of Ragam and Tanam, without the beauty of both.

The Tala string is gently sounded, where there is no Meetu (pluck). The volume of the main string and the Tala string should be balanced so that the main note is not drowned. The cheap "trang trang" sound which is so easy to produce should be avoided at all costs. In K. S. Narayanaswamy's own words, "Tanam rendering should remind us of the flowers we offer to the Goddess (Archanai), never harsh, never hurried. A shower of rose petals."

## Swaraprasthara-Music and Mathematics

There is this erroneous view prevalent in many quarters that KSN was against Swaraprasthara rendition. This is totally untrue. He, however, had many misgivings about the current trends of Swaraprasthara. The following points are a summary of what he used to feel on the subject.

1. Swaraprastharas should be replete with Raga Bhava. The rule of Gamaka, which determines Raga aesthetics, is wholly applicable to Swara rendition.
2. The logical corollary of this important theorem is that you cannot juggle with Swaras in jet speed, unless, of course, it is a Raga totally devoid of Gamakas.
3. Sarvalaghu is not just simple. There is beauty in its simplicity.

4. It would be a valuable exercise for a student to render Swaras progressively from half Avartana, and to 1,2, and more. More commonly, we are referring to Adi Tala. In case of Rupaka, and other varieties like Chapu Talas, the student can start from one Avartana. This improves the imaginative skills of the student.
5. Swaras are never to be harsh to the extent of pulling them away from their Sthana.
6. He regarded it an ugly practice that students should resort to elaborate Theermanams at the end of their Swaras without proper Raga or Laya gna. Rattling out such Swaras like a parrot required no special musical abilities.
7. This Theermanam rendering practice has, in his opinion misled the average audience more than anything else.
8. In the concert platform today, if one cannot rattle off a complex Theermanam and end it with a big thud and bang, one is not considered a Vidwan!

He used to encourage us to listen to the imaginative Swara renderings of the great Madurai Mani Iyer, his ingenuity of rendering Swaras in one Avartana without a trace of repetition. "Do you feel the need for a Theermanam here?" he would ask.

## Kritis, Keertanas and Varnams

The legacy of compositions we have inherited from our divine composers are our treasure. We have to "meditate" over these compositions. Over the years, mere practice of compositions acquires different dimensions, newer truths come to the fore.

It then acquires the status of "Mantra Upasana". These were the words he very often told his students.

On the ninth of December 1999, Sangeetha Kalanidhi K. S. Narayanaswamy was no more. Though he had been ailing for a year, he had recovered very well, and was enjoying good health during his last days.

I should consider myself greatly blessed, because I had the opportunity of spending the last two days of his life with him.

His wonderful explanations of the very subtle differences in Todi and Dhanyasi Gandhara, Ghana Raga Panchanka Tanam, Tiger Varadachariar's Saveri and Dhanyasi, and many, many more things he spoke on those two days, were like gospel truth.

On 8th December before I was to leave for Bombay, he asked me to bring him his Veena and played "Mamava Pattabhirama" in Manirangu, and immediately switched over to Madhyamavati without any confusion. With a bright smile lighting up his gentle face, "it is all in the Ri" he said. "If you capture the little oscillation accurately, the Raga is in your hands".... he said. He also called this "cadence". He continued with a sloka in Madhyamavati stressing the different Meetus that have to be adopted for vowels and consonants.

Then it was Mangalam. I folded my hands, tears in eyes. This was also not unusual for me, as it had occurred exactly this way a number of times in the past.

Only this time I did not know it was going to be the very final Mangalam.

May his soul rest in eternal peace.  
*Gurubhyo Namaha.*

- Jayashree Arvind

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## A Vainika Who Coaxed the Veena To Sing

Pristine purity of Swarasthanas, graceful Gamakas, subtle embellishments - all exquisitely rendered with precision and great sensitivity. And the mellifluous music that emerged was more like a voice singing than an instrument playing, which was the distinctive style of Veena Vidwan K. S. Narayanaswamy, who recently passed away creating a void in the realm of Karnatak Music, particularly in the arena of Vainikas.

### KSN Bani

KSN, as he was fondly called, had evolved his own style which was called the Travancore style.

"Though his style is professed to be Travancore Bani, the latter is but one of many styles that evolved from the Tanjore school. Narayanaswamy Sir's style reflects the Tanjore school in toto. But he has also developed an idiom of his own in strict adherence to the Gayaki style."

explains Vidwan Kalyani Sharma, one of his senior disciples and a well-known performing artiste.

With this characteristic style, which is now also recognised as KSN Bani, the Veena maestro had carved a niche for himself with his own group of discerning Rasikas. He always emphasised that the veena must evoke the human voice and he played the instrument with an ingrained sense of piety. No gimmicks for him. No sacrifice of quality or purity at the altar of showmanship. Naturally the melody that flowed from his instrument enveloped one with a sense of peace and contentment that one experiences when communing with nature. His Alapanas effortlessly brought out the Raga Swaroopa. His Tanams were in a class by itself. He was considered an expert in Niraval, not usually attempted in an instrument. But the best part of his performance was the soulful rendering of the Kritis laden with Bhava, evocative of the moods of the composers. Elaborates Kalyani Sharma :

"When Sir played Kritis like *Meenakshi Memudam* (Purvi Kalyani - Dikshitar), *Giripai Nela* (Sahana-Tyagaraja), *Kshira Sagara* (Devagandhari - Tyagaraja), just the Kritis, one would get the feeling of having heard a full-fledged Cutcheri with Ragam, Niraval and Swaram. That was his forte."

KSN was never in favour of anything that marred the beauty of the Gamakas or Raga/Sahitya Bhavas like rapid renderings, aggressive use of Tala strings and of course the contact mike. His repertoire of compositions was vast but he enjoyed handling the Ghana Ragas more. Some of his favourite Ragas were Kalyani, Sankarabaranam, Todi, Purvi Kalyani, Saveri, Atana, Kedaragoula and Begada.

Born in 1914 in Koduvayur, Narayanaswamy received his initial training in music from his mother Narayani Ammal and brother Krishna Iyer. Later he joined the Music College at Annamalai University, Chidambaram and was trained by renowned Vidwans Sabesa Iyer (vocal) Ponniah Pillai (Vocal/Mridangam) and Desamangalam Subramanya Iyer (Veena) in a Gurukulavasa atmosphere.

His musical career which spanned over five decades began in Delhi. In 1937 he returned to Annamalai University as a professor of Veena where he was involved in the publication of Tamil Krithis of Gopalakrishna Bharati, Nilakanta Sivan and Arunachala Kavi. Then he joined the Swati Tirunal. Music Academy? Trivandrum, at the invitation of the then Maharani Sethu Parvathi. Here again he assisted the then principal Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer in notating and publishing the compositions of Maharaja Swati Tirunal. Subsequently, he became the Principal of the Academy. After his retirement in 1970 he moved to Mumbai and headed the Sangeeta Vidyalaya at Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha.

The Vidyalaya rose to great heights under his stuartship. He expanded the courses to

include Violin, Mridangam, Sitar etc., built a strong devoted team of teachers and raised the standard of teaching. Naturally students flocked to the institution - there were around 500 students and Veena students alone numbered 300! It was during his tenure the Vidyalaya became affiliated to Mumbai University. Recalls S. Seshadri, a committee member of Shanmukhananda Sabha and until recently its Honorary Secretary :

"Sri Narayanaswamy was a great Vidwan - first among equals like Devakottai Narayana Iyengar, M. S. Kalyana Krishna Bagavathar, S. Balachander et al. Shanmukhananda was fortunate to have him. When he was the Principal we never interfered in the management of the school since we knew it was in the safest hands. He definitely enriched the Vidyalaya".

### Great Guru

KSN was a great Guru and his teaching abilities were par excellence. All his disciples recall how he strove for perfection and never proceeded to a new composition till all the students learnt to play the old one correctly.

"He was a perfectionist and expected the same kind of devotion and commitment from his students. He was very particular about how each note had to be touched and how much each Swara had to be oscillated. He would teach everybody equally. For those whose grasping capacity was less he evolved easier methods. Sir always had an analytical mind - a trait he acquired from his Gurus. Teaching made him get more involved in research and he advised us to adopt a similar approach. He used to say - it is not enough to learn and play or sing a composition. You should observe how a particular Sangati is being played; how a particular swara oscillates etc"

recalls Kalyani Sharma.

Reiterates yet another senior disciple and performing artiste, Janaki Rangan :

"He was a great teacher and learning under him was like a pilgrimage. He never used to talk about extraneous matter. It was just music, all the way in the class. He would make us play a Pallavi or a phrase several times till we got it perfectly. According to him only repeated play of a composition made it perfect, (comparing it to a pickle, how the longer it had soaked in all the ingredients the tastier it became). And he would correct our mistakes gently without seeming to do so."

Little wonder many of his Sishyas established themselves as top rank performers, some of whom have also held prestigious posts in renowned institutions. To name a few Sangeetha Bhushanam (late) K. K. Sivaraman (ex-professor Swati Tirunal Academy), Sangeetha Bhushanam R. Pichumani; Ghana Bhushanams, Janaki Hariharan and Shantamma (both served as Principal at Swati Tirunal Academy); Vidwan Kalyani Sharma ('A' grade AIR artiste in both vocal and veena, ex-professor of Swati Tirunal Academy and former Joint Director of Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Vidyalaya); Ghana Bhushanams R. Rukmani, R. Subbalakshmi (both were professors at Swati Tirunal Academy), Vidwans R. Venkataraman and Nirmala Parthasarathy. Even renowned musician like M. S. Subbulakshmi and Dr. Narayana Menon were KSN's Sishyas.

The veteran Vainika was not a publicity monger not did he run after glory but awards aplenty have sought him out. Among the various honours bestowed on him, State Awards of Kerala (1962) and Tamil Nadu (1968), Central Sangeetha Natak Academy Award (1968), Padma Bhushan (1977), Sangeetha Kalanidhi (1980) are worth mentioning. He was also the Asthana Vidwan of Travancore and tutor to the Royal family.

He has performed extensively all over India and abroad. He was a member of several music and cultural delegations that toured USSR, Australia, Germany and East European countries. He attended the Bath Music Festival at the invitation of world renowned violinist Yehudi Menuhin, He also performed at London, Bristol, Oxford, Cambridge and Birmingham. Menuhin was a great admirer of KSN and a close comaradery developed between them. Likewise in India the association between KSN and Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer which began in the late 'forties soon evolved into a close friendship. Both would spend hours discussing and analysing the various aspects of music.

### Gentle & Simple

As a person too the Veena virtuoso was a class apart. Simplicity of attire (a white Veshti and Kurtha) gentleness of manner and a friendly smile for one and all were the hallmarks of the Vidwan's personality. He had an aura of contained dignity

"He was a gentleman to the core. I have never seen him getting angry or utter a harsh word."

states Seshadri.

Reminisces Janaki Rangan :

He never criticised anybody which was yet another great quality in him. He used to attend all the performances at the Sabha irrespective of whether

the artiste was a student or renowned Vidwan and enjoy the concert sitting in the front row. But he never made any adverse comment about their performance. It is their style of playing - what they have learnt from their Gurus. We should not comment on it he would remark. He did not criticise even our performance. He would always point way the best way to play without saying ours was not right."

Until his last days the great Vidwan harboured a soft corner for Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Vidyalaya, his Sishyas, Rasikas and friends in Mumbai. They in turn held him in high esteem and cherished their association with him.

- Janaki Krishnamoorthi

### Supreme Bliss of Nadopasana

*Music is not only the most flexible and dynamic medium to express the fulfilment of adoring Lord but is also a very effective and efficacious means to seek the experience of it. When devotion seeks expression in manifold moods assuming various relationships with the Lord, there arises music. The experience of it in essence is **Brahmananda**, the goal of **Nadopasana**.*

*Nada became Rama to Saint Tyagaraja and Sangeeta Rama incarnated through Tyaga Brahma. To Sri Syama Sastry the 'Nadachit' appeared as Kanchi Kamakshi. He pursued Her with the Bhava and Artha and Raga to perceive the Glory of Silence through the trellis of Tala. That is how Nadopasakas go beyond the **Nama** and **Rupa**. Nada was "Brahmamaya Prakashini, Nama Rupa Vimarshini, Kamakala Pradarshini and Samarasyanidarshini" for Sri Muthuswamy Dikshitar. It took him through the corridors of **Sruti** to "Sachidaananda Paripurna Brahmasmi".*

Courtesy - Tryamba keswarananda in "Tattvaloka"

## Musings of the Maestro

(Shri K. S. Narayanaswamy shared his thoughts and views with Smt Kalyani Sharma when she met him in March 1998 at Trivandrum. Published below are excerpts from the taped interview).\*

What is the difference between Raga Bhavam and Sahitya Bhavam? Does Bhavam mean the same in both?

Often we hear different musicians handling a Raga differently. Is it all right to do so?

I am only repeating what I have heard from my Gurus and other seniors. The Swara combinations, its Nedil and Kuril reflect the Raga Bhavam. For example, let us take Todi. One must first observe the Raga Chaya - how its Gandharam sounds on its own; how it is presented when combined with Rishabam or when associated with Madhyamam. The Bhavam has to emerge clearly when one sings a Raga - it should be portrayed in a way that enables the listener to grasp it. In an ideal situation both the singer's and listener's Bhavam merge.

Some artistes do give it a different image. They use the same Swaras but sing it differently. Their argument is why should we not sing it this way, after all we are using the Raga Swaras only. Let me explain it with an example. In temples during Navarathri we adorn the Devi in different ways. One day as Mahisashura Mardhini, another day with gold Kavacham. Yet another day as a small child in a swing. But the Devi remains the same. It is the same basic Swarupam that is being presented with different embellishments. The external decoration is done without impairing the beauty or changing the identity of the Goddess.

The same way a Raga can be presented with different Bhavams without marring its Swarupa. A good Vidwan would have the required talent and ability to do it. To acquire the skill one must learn many compositions of renowned Vaggeyakaras and observe the way they have treated the Raga, the Sancharas they have used to describe a certain emotion; the features of gods; how they have used the Sancharas below Panchamam, how they have combined the Swaras etc. Here the Raga Bhavam and Sahitya Bhavam merge creating great compositions. Tyagaraja, Dikshitar, Syama Sastry's compositions belong to this category. They can be a great guide to those who wish to learn. One can notice this beautiful blend of Raga and Sahitya Bhavams clearly in *Meenakshi Memudam* (Purvi Kalyani), particularly in the Charanam.

Why do you disapprove of mikes and contact mike?

An infant talk (*Mazhalai*) is soft and can be heard only within a certain range. Since you cannot hear it can you keep a microphone and enhance the sound? If you do it will it be as pleasing as it would be in its original form? We can enjoy a child chatter only when we hear it as it is. Likewise Veena has to be heard with its original sound. Mike may enhance the sound but the very intricate Gamakas and mild nuances will lose their charm when amplified. And they can be clearly portrayed only in a Veena. This is, of course, my opinion.

Veena concerts are dwindling and so are the audiences for the concerts. Why is it so?

Instrumental concerts as such have always been far and few. There are not many violin solos either. Audiences do not appreciate Veena or, any other instrument for that matter, like they do the vocal music. It is understandable. Once Brindamma told me that to enjoy the Veena one required certain Gnanam. It is true. No doubt vocal is more important because it comes from a human being. Here words can be heard and understood. When Tiger Varadachariar sang the Charanam of 'O Jagadamba' (Anandabhairavi-Syama Sastry) where the composer speaks to the Goddess like a child to his mother - (Why are you neglecting me? You are saving the whole world. Is it difficult for you to save me?) - these beautiful words combined with Sahitya Bhavam and Raga Bhavam were presented so well that the listeners were lifted to a higher plane. This is possible only when the audience can hear the Sahitya and understand it. In an instrument the listener can only enjoy the Raga Bhavam. The Sahitya is not heard. Hence only those who know the song and its wordings will be able to enjoy Veena, provided the artiste plays well.

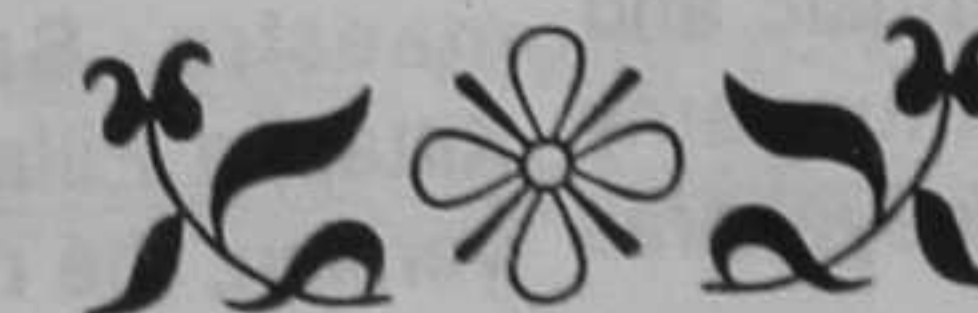
I will give another example. An artist paints various figures-God, Rath, Elephant. An observer will say 'Oh this elephant looks so realistic. Since he has seen an elephant and is familiar with it he is able to appreciate it. Otherwise he will say he saw some crooked lines four pillars and so on.

Public do not appreciate instrumental music due to lack of knowledge. Hence Sabhas also face problems as there is not much collection when Veena concerts are arranged. So they are reluctant to call Veena artistes. It is sad because if the Sabhas who are supposed to promote good music do not do it, then who will?

How does teaching help a musician?

Teaching is a lesson to the teacher also. We have to learn and prepare ourselves first to reach them. When I was at Annamalai University, I saw a professor giving his notes to a student and asking him to copy it and return it soon as he required it to teach the next class. That shows how much pains the professor took to prepare himself for a class. If all our teachers are as sincere the quality of our music will never deteriorate. Children will also learn with interest. There are some who feel that performing on concert platform is more important than teaching. I do not subscribe to this view. Only a musician with high proficiency, knowledge, clear thinking and commitment can become a teacher.

Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Vidyalaya during my tenure had that kind of teachers. Some of them are still there continuing their great contribution to music. I enjoyed my association with Shanmukhananda and the 15 long years I spent in Bombay. I still have considerable attachment for the Vidyalaya. I wish it would reach greater heights producing good quality singers, Vainikas and other artistes.



\* We publish elsewhere the author's tribute to the maestro in Tamil.



## "Silenced Cymbals"



Guru Kittappa Pillai

One more bastion of Bharata Natyam fell with the demise of Bharata Vidwan Guru K. P. Kittappa Pillai during the last quarter of the last millennium. He was a torch bearer of the chaste Bharata Natya Sampradaya.

The genealogy of the octogenarian Guru Kittappa Pillai, tracing back to Subbaroyan Nattuvanar of Serfoji's time makes an interesting study. It was like a banyan tree with branches producing many distinguished Nattuvanars and dance teachers, some on the direct (male) line, some being descendants on the women's side, most of whom were not dancers. Many originated styles of their own and carved a niche for themselves.

To begin with, the four sons of Subbaroyan Nattuvanar - Chinnayya, Ponniah, Sivanandam and Vadivel-popularly known as the Tanjore Quartet made history in the field of music and Bharata Natyam. Disciples of Sri Muthuswamy Dikshitar, the Tanjore Quartet were Vaggeyakaras

in their own right. Vadivel was the Asthana Vidwan in the royal court of Maharaja Swati Tirunal. In dance they formulate for the first time a streamlined Margam comprising Alarippu, Jatiswaram, Sabdam, Varnam/Swarajati, Padam, Javali, Tillana in that order, for a Bharata Natya performance and composed the respective songs too. That set the tradition which is followed even today.

The famous Pandanallur Meenakshisundaram Pillai, who was well-versed in the theory and practice of Bharata Natyam and who carved what has been known as the Pandanallur style was Kittappa's maternal grandfather. And his paternal grandfather Kannuswamy was a renowned musician. Father Ponniah Pillai too rose to eminence as a musician and adorned the prestigious seat of Principal, Annamalai University College of Music, Chidambaram. He was the first musician from among the Nattuvanar family to be honoured with the title "Sangita Kalanidhi" by the Music Academy, Madras.

Being heir to such an illustrious Parampara, it is no surprise Kittappa Pillai was soaked in music and dance since birth and blossomed into an eminent musician and dance Guru. He was trained systematically in both the arts and also in Mridangam.

Kittappa Pillai had given vocal recitals, dueting with Narayanaswamy, son of a relative Pichappa Pillai. Musician Kittappa also served the Music College of Annamalai University as a faculty member. He was a composer of merit too. His Javalis have been published by his disciple Padmini Rao of Bangalore.

More. Along with his brother, Veena maestro, Sangita Kalanidhi Sivanandam, Kittappa Pillai brought to light through a Tamil version, the rare Telugu compositions of his

ancestors, thanks to the patronage of Mrinalini Sarabai's "Darpana" Ahmedabad. (It may be pointed out that the family had the privilege of receiving special honours of "Ashtakodi" during Brahmotsavam in Brihadeeswarar Temple at Tanjore. *Sarabhendra Bhoopala Kuravanji* composed by Kottaiyur Sivakozhundu Desikar and tuned and choreographed by the Tanjore Quartet family was presented then).

In the field of Bharata Natyam Kittappa Pillai had few equals. A torch-bearer of tradition, he expounded with finesse the Margam framed by his ancestors. A learned scholar Pillai was a teacher, *non pareil*. In his hands, the intricate choreography of the Pada Varnams and Tana Varnams of Meenakshisundaram Pillai attained a finesse and he trained Shanta Rao of Bangalore and conducted her programmes in various cities. There was an easy felicity in his Nattuvangam.

Even in his old age his Nattuvangam elevated many a performance. He was the first to present Navasandhi Kavuthvam of Tirunelveli Ganagamuthu Annavi at public recitals and the dancers were Vyjayantimala and Padmalochani (*Navasandhi Kavuthvam* was a temple ritual performed by Devadasis earlier.)

Guru Kittappa Pillai's disciples were legion, prominent among whom are Vyjayantimala, Sudharani Raghupaty, Hema Malini, Padmalochni Nagarajan and Bangalore Padmini Rao. Many dance exponents and teachers have benefited from the workshops he conducted at various capital cities like Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Chennai, Mumbai (NCPA) and abroad at Canada etc.

Awards and honours came his way. Modest and unostentatious, Pillai took them in his stride. Bangalore Academy Award, Central Sangeet Natak Akadamy Award and its Fellowship, Chidambaram Natyanjali's "Natya Kalanidhi" Chennai Tamil Isai Sangam's "Isai Pararignar", SRUTI Foundation's "E. Krishna Iyer's Award", Madhya Pradesh Government's "Kalidas Samman" were some of the honours he received. But, unfortunately, he was not there to receive "Kalidas Samman" and SNA Fellowship.

My only earnest prayer and wish is that the unbroken lineage of which Kittappa Pillai was a scion, be continued and the tradition he nurtured be carried on with care and reverence by his sons and succeeding generations.

- T. K. Mahalingam Pillai

## APPEAL

Four Volumes in the "GARLAND" series titled **A Garland, Another Garland, Yet Another Garland & The Fragrant Garland** are before the music-loving public. Readers of **SHANMUKHA** would have perused the gracious reviews of the books by the Editor. It is my desire to wind up the 'GARLAND' series of Biographical Dictionary of Carnatic Composers, Musicians with the fifth and the last of the series. I shall be grateful if Vidwans and Vidushis of standing and musicologists help with full-bio-data, special comments, anecdotes and achievements and join the non-commercial *Yagna*. Those whose lives had been included already may peruse the contents in the four books & suggest additions worthy of being passed on to music-loving public & posterity.

'GARLAND' Rajagopalan

## CARNATIC CLASSICALS

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## A Touch of Class

Harikatha is like a modern department stores. Every form of art can be found in it - music, philosophy, poetry, languages, rhythm, story, why, even dance to an extent said the eminent scholar - exponent of this artform Kalyanapuram Aravamudan. A disciple of the doyen of this artform Embar Vijayaraghavachariar and a musician with a powerful robust voice, and a commanding stature Aravamudan performed the 'Kathas' on two subjects *Kulasekharar* and *Narayana Theertha* which enthralled the audience for the substance and sustenance.

A Rama Bhakta, Kulasekhara, was also a devotee of Bhaktas (rather a devotee of devotees). The story was spun around the royal devotee's devotion to his Ishta Devatha, his duty to his people, and his reverence of Bhaktas to whom his abode was always open. In his copious exposition Aravamudan pictured how deeply influenced Kulasekharar was with the epic Ramayana and how he reacted to each turn of event in the epic when recited. Interspersed with compositions of great Vaggeyakaras and Pasurams etc., finely rendered, Aravamudan made it a musical discourse with a touch of class. He was ably accompanied on the Mridangam by T. K. Tyagarajan of Mumbai.

Flautist K. S. Gopalakrishnan is a musician who never disappoints the Rasikas. His is a fine-textured style. He employs the technique of soft-blowing and delicate, graceful fingering. He has a fine sense of aesthetics to articulate both in the Manodharma (imaginative and improvisatory) and Kalpita (composed) facets. And he involves himself thoroughly in playing and thus enjoys his music. Which naturally is very delectable and pleasing.

His concert for the Shanmukhananda at the Hall (Oct 20th) was, needless to say, a rich

experience. He was teamed up with Mysore Manjunath, another artiste of aesthetic disposition, known for 'enchanting' melody and Guruvayur Dorai, an inspiring veteran percussionist, who elevates the quality of any artiste he accompanies, assisted on the Ghatam by Udupi Sridhar.

Opening with Saveri Varnam, KSG invoked Lord Ganesha through Papanasam Sivan's Sriranjani Kriti *Gajavadana*. Once very popular in the 'fifties, it has become now a 'rare gem' and he presented it with fine sheen. Swaras in Sarvalaghu with certain built-in rhythmic intricacy were neatly reciprocated by Manjunath.

Begada and *Sankari nivani* has almost become synonymous with KSG's concerts. Yet every time he performs there is something that strokes your heart. No stale stuff. Begada had some hues culled out from various Kritis and beautifully garlanded in the Raga. Toeing MSG's line Manjunath added a delightful dimension. The song in soft-toned Vilambam suited the artiste's mood and musical vision.

After a sprightly *Kanchadalayatakshi* (Kamalamanohari) the heralding of dawn in Bhoopalam in a scalic tone-weave, embellished by some frilled frescoes, lent an elusive charm to the Cutcheri. The long flute skeins spelt poignance while the violin play gracefully enhanced its sweetness. *Gopalaka Pahimam Anisam*, also a familiar number in KSG's concert repertoire for this Sabha, was enjoyable. (The Kriti has a blend of Sathvik, and sprightly passages gliding through Srothovaha Yati that it gives the inspiration necessary for one to start the day.)

In the tranquil calm that the bass play registered flowed Kambhoji in all its subdued grandeur. The soft blow, the silken weave, the methodical build-up, melodiously fathoming the

depths of emotion of the Raga made it a rich experience. The sedate Sukhabhava was enhanced by Manjunath's coaxing cascades of tonal pictures. Just dovetailed into this Sukhabhava was Tyagaraja's Sriranga Pancharatnam, *O! Rangasayi* in grand Vilambam. Niraval at *Bhooloka Vaikuntam* carried the spirit of the song and Swaraprastharas too were extension of this Bhakti - bhava.

This great number was so satiating with the Thani pair adding their own rhythmic mite to the mighty architecture, what followed fell into supplements, Tukkadas may be too trivial a term for the efforts and innovating stance the flautist had taken. Against multi-splendoured Kapi Alapana, the oft-repeated *Enna Thavam Seyadanai* spiralled to a peak by the take off at *Yasodha!* Similarly, *Vaikuntapura vasa* as take-off stance for *Venkatachala Nilayam* after a soulful Sindhu Bhairavi enthralled one and all.

Now, a word about percussion Thani, Guruvayur Dorai and Udupi Sridhar's play was an education on rhythmic. From delicate strokes to vibrant variations, Dorai made a great sweep of rhythm and the intricacies it opened up to in a Talam. The basic pace of Vilambam was quite comfortable for playing the intricacies. The varying Gati-Bhedas and the combinations he played was an education a keen student of Mridangam could be benefited by. One, for once, did not mind lengthy Thani.

Thinking of Kambhoji, its subdued grandeur, the sedate Vilambam and the Kriti *O! Rangasayi*, one is drawn to the concert of Bombay Jayashree. Incidentally, her concert too comprised the three-some highlights of KSG's - ie., Bhoopalam, Sriranjani and Kambhoji and all exuded a delicate charm, a subdued grace and grandeur. Jayashree has now settled down to a sedate, Sathvik style, prefers Vilambam to "Viruviruppu (sprightly pace), and is introspective and intuitive. Naturally her music is much mellowed down but gained in Bhava - the feel of the Raga and Sahitya. In short the music is well balanced. Even brisk-paced phrasings are tempered.

Jayashree's performance for Sri Ram Group and Shanmukhananda was a big draw, *Karunanidhiye Thaye* (Bhoopalam) was marked for the feel of the Raga and Sahitya. Sangathees flowed with subtle deflective graces in *Mata Innum vada* (Sriranjani) the Alapana of which was a sustained picture without much frills or fanciful flights. The sedate articulation brought about a tranquil calm and Kambhoji rose to great heights through soulful delineation and embellished forays. *O! Rangasayi* in Vilambam, the Niraval and Swaras were reflective of the artiste's Manodharma.

Unlike the senior topnotchers who invariably omit Ragam - Tanam - Pallavi. Jayashree chose to do an evocative enunciation of Shanmukhapriya for RTP that was excellent in every segment of improvisation.

The team that gave her amiable support comprised S. R. Kannan (Violin), Ganesh (Mridangam) and Karthik (Ghatam).

Kambhoji seemed to be an obsession with the artists this season. While its soulful depth and grace were highlighted by KSG and Jayashree, two other stalwarts earlier gave it a different treatment. Its soulful depth apart Kambhoji has its own majesty. It has what one may call a 'Raja Margam' in traditional mode of Alapana and needs no props or extraneous nuances for embellishment. One was intrigued why Hyderabad Brothers made it a trifle frivolous. If, on the one hand, Seshachari in his Alapana efforts many a time cuddled it with its parent Raga and frequently resorted to the upper "Ri Gaa Ri" phrase with an elongated Gandhara, that had an odd ring! Why this straying into 'alleys and lanes' - innovation or embellishment? Again *O! Rangasayi* was rudely shaken up. As one Rasika commented they banged the Vaikuntam in Niraval. Playing to the gallery? If so it only irked the Rasikas.

Another concert which had Kambhoji in a major elaboration was Trichur Ramachandran's. It had all the glamour and glitter, a 'race with

Ragas which at times owing to 'camouflage of nuances' brought in many an alien shade; and Kambhoji was no exception. Veena Kuppier's *Koniyadinanapai* is a magnificent Sangati-studded structure. Should that be rendered as a frenzied exercise?

And senior artistes, including some top-notchers are singing from the scripts. Almost all of them are teachers too. If they themselves resort to script-singing, how are we going to stem the practice of 'learning from Casette guru and singing from script' so rampant among youngsters? Senior artistes have a great responsibility towards young and up-coming artists and it is time they gave a serious thought to this factor.

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"Sangam". A never before "Jugalbandhi of two living legends" in Mumbai, it was hailed. Yes, it was in a way, though there had been many Jugalbandis and "National Integration" Programmes, North-South Meet in the same hall. Sangam brought to light clearly certain facts which had been clouded in misconception.

Both Pt. Hariprasad Chaurasia, the inimitable Flute maestro and the unsurpassed vocal wizard Dr. Mangalampalli Balamurali Krishna are, as the organisers (Shanmukhananda and Standard Chartered Bank) claimed, 'living legends', and for percussion accompanists they had none other than Anindo Chatterjee (Tabla) and 'Vikku' Vinayakram (Ghatam) both virtuosos in their own field, besides Madhavan (Violin) and Rama-krishnan (Mridangam) who are sensitive sidemen.

The artistes started with individual performances and then attempted the blend. The flowing was from different directions, as they said, to mingle finally. Such presentations were nothing new. What was new and significant was the education, the clarity it emphatically provided. Pt. Chaurasia and sons played Marwa. The slow and steady build-up of the Vilambit by the trio, the sons sincerely capturing the father-Guru's

nuances and adding their own melodic graces or pauses, and the Pandit finely on the lead, letting Anindo his fill of rhythmic frills, the move to Drut and the finale - all were pleasingly entertaining. An impressive opening for the day's Sangam. However, the typical Chaurasia style, that Yogic involvement with the Raga Devta, that meditative spell of melody, were missing. Perhaps, time constraint!

Came Balamurali Krishna, He came, he sang, he conquered. More. Many a misconception about Karnatak music he cleared, such as: that Karnatic music is composition just oriented; that Tala plays a dominant role; that it knows no Vilambam; that Manodharma is in fetters and improvisation has limited scope etc., etc.

It was succinct education Balamurali imparted on Karnatak music and presented not only its salient features, but also laid bare its supremacy in the world of music. That justified why a Karnatak musician is able to master Hindustani Music and remains a felicitous performer in both and not vice versa.

Coming to his 'Solo', he presented Shanmukhapriya. He put to full use his resonant, resounding voice, in a full three-octave range (an unusual phenomenon) and traversed freely in open-throated peregrination now, in modulated graces, now bringing out the essence of the Raga. As if determined to prove the quality and grandeur of Karnatak music, he opened the Raga in a very relaxed Vilambam building up the image on scale-based phrasings (which intrigued many a Rasika). Perhaps the scale-based delineation was much in tune with Hindustani Alap but nowhere was the build-up skeletal. It exuded a rare poignance, the bass sounding quite Gathra. After Vilambam Balamurali was in his element, weaving patterns after patterns over the octaves scanning the gamut of emotions. The composition, his own, had Swarakshara aesthetics - *Sada Tavapada Sannidhimkuru* and embellished with exquisite Swaraprastharas. Madhavan (Violin) gave splendid support and Rama Krishna and Vikku Vinayakram excelled in percussion.

After intermission the real Sangam took place in Raga Malkauns (Hindolam) with only percussion for accompaniments. Balamurali Krishna started Hindolam Alapana with Chaurasia accompanying. Then they interacted, each responding to the other. The Vocalist had great vocal power and his evocative expression did cast a magic spell and Chaurasia took it in his own stride. Left to himself he rose to melodic heights. It was Taan that highlighted the Sangam spirit. Both Zestfully traversed over the Taan, reaching Ati Drut and still not losing improvisatory impulse. And to Chaurasia's Gat Bandish Balamurali spontaneously sang the most popular *Samaja vara gamana* as a Pallavi. The Gat-Pallavi build-up had the immaculate Tabla - Ghatam accompaniment. If the musicians led each other in melodic extemporisation with Alap, Sahitya, Taan and Swaraprastharas, the percussionists made an exemplary essay on Laya Vinyasa. It was a rare, rich experience. The concluding Bhairavi - Sindhu Bhairavi Bhajan. *Bhajera Yadhu Veeram Manasa* was a fine finale.

For an actual programme of 2-hour-duration one had to sit through for how long with intermissions!

The same intermissions dragging nearly for an hour between two programmes tested the patience of Rasikas who had to miss some interesting phase of presentations as they extended beyond 11 p.m. This is about Apoorva Parva, another ambitious 3-day (17-19 December, 1999) programme which presented two great stalwarts each day. Called "An Epic Millennium", the festival featured M. S. Gopalakrishnan (Violin) assisted by daughter Narmada (Violin) with Omkar Gulvadi on the Tabla and 'Sangeet Marthand' Pt. Jasraj with Kala Ramnath (Violin) and Kedar Pandit (Tabla) on the opening day; Pt. C. R. Vyas (Vocal) with Purushottam Walwalkar (Harmonium) and Omkar Gulvadi (Tabla) and Pt. Briju Maharaj in Kathak with Ustad Zakir Hussain (Tabla) on the second day; and Shivkumar Sharma (Santoor) with Ustad Zakir Hussain (Tabla) and Sangeet Samrat Pt. Bhimsen Joshi with Tulsidas Borkar

(Harmonium) and Nana Mulay (Tabla) on the concluding day - (Vaikunta Ekadasi) morning session.

With delay in start and long gap between two sessions, one could be able to stay only up to the first hour of the second session and miss a good portion of the latter half of Pt. Jasraj and Pt. Birju Maharaj. M. S. G's opening Raag Yaman revealed the maestro's unsullied handling of the two systems of Indian music of which he is a great master. The master-melodist's Yaman was purely on Hindustani build-up, the 'Chaya' of its Karnatak Kalyani nowhere sneaking in. The sedate start in Vilambit, the elongated Meend-phrasings, the mild Gamakas, and more straight-note deployment were all played with natural ease. The swift Taans which had MSG stamp in octaval plough back, the Madhya Laya and Drut gats with a rhythmic thrill were exhilarating.

Kiravani, an 'adopted' Karnatak Raga, was well-adapted to Hindustani shaili. Even in the pointedly pure-note build-up MSG brought out the inherent poignance of the Raga. He made an integrated phase of Tanam-Taan combine, that had a unique Indian-ness of music. It was elevating. Here was an example that Taan need not be an embellishing Manodharma phase, it could be elevating too. The Gat too had a spontaneous get-up, the structural, elegance, its aesthetic ambience, the contours, the crescendo all making it a play of Swanubhava to the artiste and a rich experience to the audience. "Apoorva Parva" had an auspicious start. The Sangat finely fused with the main performance.

Pt. Jasraj's Maru Behag was an education to the audience on Riyaz! The richness of resonance in his voice, the breath control, the elongated pauses and phrasings are astonishing. What Riyaz he must have made to mould his voice and mind to musical expression! Time constraint bothered him least. He was in his own world of music. The opening phase of Maru Behag took sometime to unfold, giving one an impression that he was imparting training on stage; but soon the maestro came on his own

picturing the Bandish in his inimitable style. Kala Ramnath (Violin) rose up to give adequate Sangat. Kedar Pandit played with great understanding.

It was unfortunate one could not stay for the whole session.

Pt. C. R. Vyas started with Shree, a raga that is sombre and has a ring of sanctity, especially to the South Indian audience. For it is in its corresponding Karnatak Raga, Gaulipantu, that Saint Tyagaraja composed and sang *Teratiyagarada* at Tirupati. Pt. Vyas is a great exponent of Bandishes; he venerates them as in his view, Bandish is a concrete form of Raga, and it is in a Bandish and its delineation that one finds the full image of a Raga, its scope for opening up one's mind and Manodharma. And his Sancharas around the signature of the composition *Dasa Guni* highlighted not only the aesthetics of the Bandish but also the in-depth vision and profundity of the Pandit. He had five sishyas including his son Suhas Vyas to assist him and each was given enough exposure which they utilised to the utmost. One felt happy that Panditji has groomed a good Sishya Parampara to let classical music go well into the present generation.

The next Bandish had Nayaka-Nayaki Bhava and the Raga looked akin to Karnatak Bhairavam. The delineation was excellent. Could it not extend, one felt when it had to be concluded!

After a prolonged wait Birju Maharaj with Zakir Hussain performed his Kathak. From the very opening *Govinda Gopala Murare* it was a joy to watch this great maestro perform Bhav, pure Nritya in various numbers. The Thumri, the Tatkar, the Jugalbandhi engaged both the veterans at their intricate peak and each came out with magnificent performance.

Concluding day had two more stalwarts of Hindustani music, viz., Pt. Shivkumar Sharma and Pt. Bhimsen Joshi in a morning session.

Despite the delay people sat through as there was no time stress on a holiday and music (performing or listening) was the best means of worshipping the Lord on the Vaikunta Ekadasi.

The Santoor maestro Shiv Kumar had Zakir Hussain for Tabla Sangat. And the Ustad whose sizzling rhythmic with Kathak maestro Briju Maharaj astonished one the previous night was surprisingly Sathvik and let the 100-stringed instrument have its sway. He at times quietly dueted. He was master of technique and he knew where to restrain. That is the way of great masters. Ahir Bhairav was a pleasing melody one was treated to and both played with easy response and fine reciprocity.

Pt. Bhimsen Joshi still reigns, despite his ailment. His voice though a bit thickened has not a bit dimmed in its grandeur, volume and rich stentorian tone.

His Brindavan Sarang unfolded itself in slow, evocative build-up. As the maestro reached the Taan sthan he came into his element sending darts of flourishes. The Drut Bandish in itself was a thrill.

And what a thrill it was when he started the next number in Behag without wasting a minute! That reminded one of Margadarshi Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar.

*Deva Vitthala*, and his Bhairavi Bhajan were devotionals not merely in rendering. They touched the hearts, took us to an ethereal world. As aptly remarked by President of Shanmukhananda Dr. V. Subramanian, Pt Bhimsen Joshi is not only "Samrat of Hindustani music" but a "Samrat of Music".

\* \* \* \* \*

From the dance sector, there were Hema Malini's costume-ballet *Geet Govind*, differently abled Children's *Devi* and *Krishna* and Los Angeles-based Mythili Prakash's Bharta Natyam solo.

Choreographed with an aesthetic perception in Bharata Natyam technique plus flowing movements by Deepak Mujumdar. (a product of Nalanda Dance Academy), who has carved a niche for himself in dance world and tuned by Ashit Desai the fine melodist, Jayadeva's *Geet Govind* had all the necessary substance in visual and sustenance in music to make it an impressive dance production. *Geet Govind*, a love epic of Madhurya Rasa can tempt a producer to cash in on Loka Dharmi to earn popularity. But caution and restraint have been employed to adhere to the composer's perception and vision; a little bit of eroticism, slightly oversuggestive here and there could be overlooked in an otherwise pleasing presentation that tells the story in light-technique, smooth flow of dances backed by melodious, evocative music. Though one could not feel the spirituality attached to the epic-poem, the dances certainly had the synchrony and sequences making for a pleasing visual.

No more could the children with certain defects be called 'handicapped'. For here were they dancing away their 'handicaps', whatever be their intensity. That they were "differently abled" as claimed by the organisers was proved beyond doubt in the ballets of *Devi* and *Krishna* directed by Viji Iyengar, Gowri and Bharati with music tuned by Shri Narayanan. Fine Arts could mould a child and bring out its art instinct to the fore and help it shed its sense of inadequacy and be a normal being. The Society for the Rehabilitation of the Handicapped has been doing yeoman service in this direction, and each production over the years has helped children of various 'inadequacies' to nurture their innate talent and forge ahead as normal being in the society. The dance upheld the universal equality of the humans in perception and practice. Here was a real 'spiritual' upliftment.

Mythili Prakash, daughter-disciple of Viji Prakash of Shakti Academy of Los Angeles showed her mettle even as an eight-year old kid nine years ago when she ascended the stage in Arangetram. Her art instincts are inborn and her

talent has been carefully nurtured by her dancer-mother Viji and today Mythili has blossomed into a dancer of refined taste. There was an inborn glow, an involvement in her gestures, expressions and articulation when she performed at Mysore Association Hall. The exacting standards of technique imposed by the 'wings' led by her mother were so naturally danced by Mythili who made not only Shakti but also the parent institution Sri Rajarajeswari of Mumbai proud. One was happy that Bharata Natyam overseas still sustained on its tradition. Kudos to Viji and her team.

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Samudaya Kritis (Group Kritis) or Varga Rachanas are a chain of compositions on a particular theme. They are found to be of interest from academic and entertainment points of view. It is given to only a few Vaggeyakaras to compose such a thematic "Chain of Songs". The Trinity and Oothukkadu Venkata Subbiar of the pre-Trinity era are some who excelled in these Kritis. Among these Oothukkadu Venkata Kavi's Saptaratna Kritis, Navavarna Kritis, Tyagaraja's Ghana Raga Pancharatna Kritis, Kshetra Pancharatnas, Dikshitar's Navagraha, Navavarna, Panchalinga Sthala Kritis, Vibhakti Kritis, Swati Tirunal's Navarathri Kritis, Syama Sastri's Navaratnamalika are some of the well-known group compositions in vogue.

While musicians learn a few pieces from each group, very few have mastered the whole lot. It is heartening that among the experienced Vidwans and teachers some of them are involved in imparting training in these specialised thematic compositions. After Shanmukhananda had taken the initiative in the 'eighties many teachers have gone into it, in Mumbai and elsewhere.

Continuing her efforts Smt. Kalyani Sharma (ex-Jt. Director, Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Vidyalaya) has covered Tyagaraja Kshetra Kritis, Dharmasamvardhani and Panchanadeeswarar Kritis, besides Dikshitar's Navavarnas, Navagraha Kritis and Swati Tirunal's Navarathri group and is currently on Dikshitar's 'Vibhakti' Kritis (also called Navavarnas).

It may be of interest to note that Muthuswamy Dikshitar had composed the maximum number Samudaya Kritis. "Vibhakti Kritis" are eight in number composed on a deity and each is cast in one of the eight Vibhaktis (cases in which a noun is inflected in Sanskrit). This practice he followed wherever he composed eight kritis or more on a deity.

The first of the Vibhakti Kritis he composed at Tiruttani on his return to Tamilnadu from Banaras enroute Tiruvarur. It was at Tiruttani that he was blessed with Lord Subramanya's Darshan and he sang *Sri Nadadi Guruguho Jayati Jayati* in Mayamalavagowla and other chain of compositions on Lord Subrahmanya and also coined his Mudra "Guruguha". The other Vibhakti Kritis are on Abhayamba of Mayavaram, Lord Tyagaraja of Tiruvarur, Neelotpalamba in Tiruvarur besides Kamalamba (Navavarnam).

Kamalamba and Neelotpalamba are two manifestations of Devi the former; the Tapaswin doing penance for the hand of Lord Shiva and has to be propitiated with Navavarna Puja involving Tantric worship and the latter, Devi after her wedlock with the Lord and propitiated with 8 Vibhakti Kritis.

Celebrating Dikshitar Day on Deepavali Day (Nov.7, 1999), the day the Savant attained Mukti, Shanmukhananda Sabha featured "Samudaya Kritis", a select few from the Vaggeyakara's gems. The repertoire presented by Prema Krishnan, Radha Santhanam, Bhavani Srinivasan and Renuka Rajan under the direction and conceptualisation of Kalyani Sharma comprised *Kari Kalābha mukham* (Saveri - on Lord Vigneshwara), *Suryamurthe* (Sourashtaram-Navagraha Kritis), *Arunachala natham* (Saranga

- on Tiruvannamalai deity), *Kamalambikayai* (Kambhoji - Navavarnam), *Sri Neelothpala Nayike* (Ritigowla - Vibhakti Kritis), *Abhayamba* (Kalyani - another Vibhakti kriti), *Shadanane* (Khamas on Shanmukha) and *Hariharaputram* (Vasantaha on Shastha).

With S. V. Ramachandran, an experienced musician giving Violin Sangat with understanding and Sriram Suryanarayan a talent who has already won acclaim on percussions, (Mridangam and Kanjira) accompanying on Mridangam the 'Shanmukhananda quartet' rendered the Kritis in tuneful synchrony. A well-conceived and presented Anjali.

Following the group rendition was a Vocal solo by Shri G. S. Mani, an elder musician of Mumbai trained under many stalwarts.

On Christmas Day, 1846, Maharaja Swati Tirunal attained the lotus feet of Lord Padmanabha, his Ishtadevata. Within a short span of 33 years of life, this royal composer had created a variety of compositions ranging from Varnam to Tillana, including Kriti, Padam, Javali, Samudaya Kritis, Opera, and Hindustani Bandishes. Students of Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Vidyalaya - Rajeswari, Saraswati Ramasubramaniam (under Prema Krishnan's tutelage); Janaki Krishnamoorth, once a student of Veena under Kalyani Sharma and then a faculty member; and others such as Padmini Vijayaraghavan, a disciple of A. S. Panchapakesa Iyer and Prasanna, recently shifted to Mumbai from Chennai, and is being trained by Kiranavali Vidya Sankar paid their Sangeethanjali to the royal Composer on the last Snday (Dec. 2) of the past millennium.

- KINNARI



## SRI SHANMUKHANANDA FINE ARTS & SANGEETHA SABHA (REGD.)

292, Comrade Harbanslal Marg, Mumbai-400 022.

Phones : 407 88 88 / 403 02 13 / 401 51 64 / Fax : 409 22 11

E-Mail : shanmugananda@hotmail.com

Website : www.shanmukhananda.org.in

### PROGRAMMES - FEBRUARY - JUNE 2000

12th February, 2000 Saturday - 6.00 p.m.

Shri T. M. Krishna - Vocal

Shri Ragavendra Rao - Violin

Shri Arunprakash - Mridangam

Shri B. S. Purushotham - Ghatam

11th March, 2000 - Sunday - 6.00 p.m.

Shri Sriram Gangadhar - Vocal

Shri H. N. Bhaskar - Violin

Shri Poongulam Subramaniam - Mridangam

Shri S. Karthick - Ghatam

### SANGEETHANJALI TO PADA KAVITA PITHAMAHA ANNAMACHARYA

1ST April, 2000 Saturday - 6.00 p.m.

Sangeetha Kalanidhi Shri NEDUNURI KRISHNAMURTHY & PARTY - Vocal Concert

Jointly organised with Annamacharya Cultural Centre

13th May, 2000 Saturday - 6.00 p.m.

Ms. A. KANYAKUMARI Presents "BHARAT" 25 Violins

14th May 2000 - Saturday 6.00 p.m.

Smt. Nirmala Sunderarajan & Party - Vocal Concert

10th June 2000 - Sunday 6.00 p.m.

"SILA VEEDUGALIL SILA ASADUGAL" by Art Lovers - Tamil Drama

11th June - Sunday - 6.00 p.m.

Nritya Geethanjali presents Natya Natakams (Dance Dramas)

"THIRUMURUGAN" & "MAHAKAVI BHARATHI"

Conceived & Directed by Guru Smt. Rajee Narayan

(Recipient of "Maharashtra Rajya Sanskrutik Puraskar (Nritya)" 1997-98)

Venue : Shanmukhananda Hall

Daily Guest Ticket : Ground Floor "F" to "O" Rs.100/-, "P" to "EE" Rows Rs.50/-

Ist Balcony : Rs.30./- , IInd Balcony Rs.20/-

14<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2000 MONDAY 6.00 P.M.

Visit of the Sankaracharyas of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam,  
His Holiness **SRI JAYENDRA SARASWATHI SWAMIGAL**  
and

His Holiness **SRI SANKARA VIJAYENDRA SARASWATHI SWAMIGAL**  
to our Sabha - **ANUGRAHA BHASHANAM**

ON 3<sup>RD</sup> MARCH 2000 FRIDAY 6.00 P.M.

**SRI SHANMUKHANANDA FINE ARTS & SANGEETHA SABHA**  
AND

**THE SOUTH INDIAN EDUCATION SOCIETY, MUMBAI**

jointly organise the 31<sup>st</sup> Jayanti of

His Holiness **Sri Sankara Vijayendra Saraswati Swamigal**  
of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam

### VAGGEYAKARA DAY

13-02-2000	Sunday	6.00 to 9.00 p.m.	Mahakavi Subramanya Bharatiyar Day
26-02-2000	Saturday	6.00 to 9.00 p.m.	Purandara Dasa Day
27-02-2000	Sunday	6.00 to 9.00 p.m.	Syama Sastri Day
18-03-2000	Saturday	6.00 to 9.00 p.m.	Papanasam Sivan Day
19-03-2000	Sunday	6.00 to 9.00 p.m.	Pt. Digambar Paluskar & Pt. Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande Day

Venue : JASUBHAI CONVENTION HALL, 6th Floor, Shanmukhananda Tower

**ALL ARE WELCOME**

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**Membership :** Members are requested to pay their subscriptions for the current year i.e. 1999-2000 and collect their Laminated Membership Card from the Office of the Sabha immediately.

Jayaram Mani  
V. S. Amarnath Sury  
Hon. Secretaries

Mumbai  
25-01-2000

## "Design Within A Design"

(Pandit Bhatkhande Memorial Lectures)

The Seventh Series of Pandit Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande Memorial Lectures, instituted by the Indian Musicological Society (IMS), were delivered by the veteran musician and musicologist Pandit Dinkar Kaikini, at the International Students Hall, the Department of Music, University of Mumbai in whose collaboration the event was organised.

Smt. Krishna Khatau, President of IMS, in her inaugural address, advocated the need for deeper research in music, and widening the dimensions of investigations covering the related areas of acoustics, psychology, education and aesthetics, she said,

"Pandit Bhatkhande, the pioneer of research in Hindustani music, as it existed in the 19th Century, had left a legacy through his compendium on music, and had elaborated on the areas of further research into the history and practice of music, and education of the new generation in Indian Music and Culture".

She further added, that Pt. Dinkar Kaikini, the distinguished speaker, had a close link with Pt. Bhatkhande, through his guru, Pt. Ratanjankar who was the direct disciple of Pt. Bhatkhande.

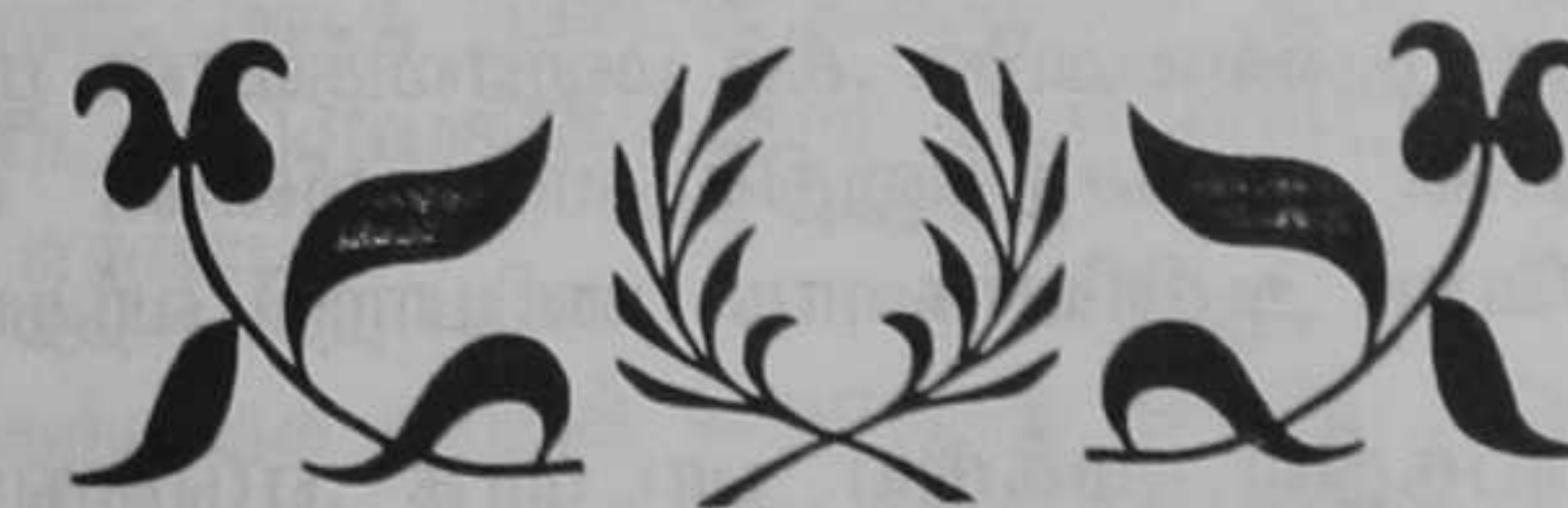
The main topic of the two lectures was : "The Place of Shruti (microtones) in the conception of Raga-structure, "The Importance of Gamaka-s and movement influencing the mode of the entities".

Illustrating with demonstration, Pt. Kaikini, in his first lecture, presented his view of the untempered scale of the 12 principal notes, his definition of the microtones, - Shrutis, - whose employment in the musical scale was a "phenomenon, which created 'Raga' with its expressional components. The word, "Raga Bhava" was expounded in the context of Raga-s Bhairava, Ramakali and Gunakri, negotiating the note Komal Rishab (D flat), characteristic to the particular Raga.

In this discourse, the next day, Pt. Kaikini dwelt upon the constituent parts in the melodic movement, such as 'Raga-Anga', 'Swaranga' and 'Khyalanga', in each of which the 'Swarakriti', 'Varnakriti' and 'Layakriti', the last one providing scope for creativity and liveliness, as per the temperament of the Raga and the performing artiste, within the parameters of the form and tradition. The speaker demonstrated the characteristic 'Swara-Sangatis' (combinations) which provided balance and design ('Aakriti'), in Ragas of similar scale but differing in emphasis through weightage to 'Vadi' and 'Samvadi' Swaras. The speaker concluded with his observation :

The Bandish, composition, was a design within a design of a Raga, which again was a design "Aakriti" - in the formal characteristics of a form, e.g. a Khyal or a Dhrupad".

- R. C. Mehta



## 'இசை ஞானி' கே.எஸ். நாராயணஸ்வாமி

உன்னதமான நமது கர்னாடக ஸங்கீதத்தை ஸம்பிரதாய சுத்தத்துடன் பேணிக் காத்து, அதுவும் வீணை வாசிப்பின் மூலம் ஸங்கீத சாஸ்திரத்தையே கரைகண்ட ஒரு ஞானியின் தெளிவுடன். வீணை என்றால் எப்படி இருக்க வேண்டும், அந்தப் புனிதமான வாத்தியத்தை எப்படிக் கையாள வேண்டுமென்பதற்கு ஒரு எடுத்துக் காட்டாக ஸங்கீத உலகில் திகழ்ந்த என் குருநாதர், ஸங்கீத கலாநிதி ஸ்ரீ கே.எஸ். நாராயணஸ்வாமி அவர்கள் டிசம்பர் 19, 1999 குருவாரம், இறைவனடி சேர்ந்தார்.

அவருடைய மறைவு ஸங்கீத உலகிற்கு ஒரு பெரிய இழப்பு. அதுவும் கிடைப்பதற்கரிய ஸங்கீத சாஸ்திரத்தின் பல நுட்பங்கள், ஸம்பிரதாய சுத்த ஸங்கீதத்தின் சிறப்பு, நம் முன்னோர்களின் பொக்கிஷங்களான நல்ல பாடாந்திர முறையில் உள்ள க்ருதிகள், அவரிடமிருந்தே கற்க, புரிந்து கொள்ள ஒரு பாக்கியமும் அவகாசமும் கிடைத்த என் போன்ற அவரது சிஷ்யர்களுக்கு அவரது மறைவு ஒரு மாபெரும் இழப்பு.

கிட்டத்தட்ட எனது 14-வது வயதிலிருந்து நான் அவரிடம் வீணை கற்க ஆரம்பித்து தொடர்ந்து கடைசிவரை அவரிடமிருந்து கற்றுத் தெரிந்து கொண்ட பல விஷயங்களை வாசகர்களுடன் பகிர்ந்து கொள்ள விரும்புகிறேன்.

ஒரு தாயின் பரிவுடனும், தந்தையின் பொறுப்புடனும், குருவின் கண்டிப்புடனும், தெய்வத்தின் ஆசீர்வாதத்துடனும் அவர் என்னை தன் குடும்பத்தின் ஒரு அங்கத்தினராகவே பாவித்துப் பழகினதால் எனக்குக் கிடைத்த பல அரிய பெரிய விஷயங்களை இக்கட்டுரையின் மூலம் உலகிற்கு தெரிவிப்பதை அவருக்கு நான் செலுத்தும் அஞ்சலியாகக் கருதுகிறேன்.

ஸங்கீத கலாநிதி கே.எஸ். நாராயணஸ்வாமி அவர்கள் பாலக்காட்டிற்கு அருகில் "கொடுவாயூர்" என்ற இடத்தில் 27.9.1914 ஸரஸ்வதி பூஜை அன்று பூராட நக்ஷத்திரத்தில் ஒரு ஸங்கீத குடும்பத்தில் பிறந்தார். தாயார் ஸ்ரீமதி நாராயணியம்மாள். தகப்பனார் கொடுவாயூர் ஸ்ரீ சிவராமய்யார். நாராயணி அம்மாள் அவர்கள் நல்ல ஸங்கீத ஞானமுள்ளவர். நன்றாக வீணையும் வாசிப்பாராம்.

சிறுவன் நாராயணஸ்வாமி அவர்கள் தனது 7-வது வயதிலேயே தனது தாயார் தமையானார் கே.எஸ். கிருஷ்ணமூர்த்தி அவர்களிடம் ஸங்கீதம் பயில ஆரம்பித்தார். ஏழாவது வயதிலேயே அவரது ஸ்வர ஞானத்தை மெச்சி ஜமீன்தாரின் மகன் குஞ்சிராம மேனன் என்பவர் தனது கையிலிருந்த நீலக்கல் (ஸபையர்) மோதிரத்தைப் பரிசளித்திருக்கிறார். தனது 14-ம் வயதில் சிதம்பரம் அண்ணாமலை பல்கலை கழகத்தில் மாணவனாகச் சேர்ந்து முறையாக ஸங்கீதம் பயின்று "ஸங்கீத பூஷணம்" பட்டம் பெற்றார்.

அப்பொழுது அண்ணாமலை கலாசாலையின் முதல்வராக டைகர் வரதாசாரியார் அவர்கள் பணியாற்றி வந்தார். அவரது தலைமையின் கீழ் மஹாவித்வான் ஸ்ரீ பொன்னய்யா பிள்ளை (பிரபல "தஞ்சை நால்வரின்" வம்சத்திலுதித்தவர்), வீணை வித்வான் தேசமங்கலம் ஸ்ரீஸுப்ரமணியய்யர் ஆகியோர் ஆசிரியர்களாக பணியாற்றி வந்தார்கள்.

எனது குருநாதர் ஆரம்பத்தில் முக்கிய பாடமாக எடுத்துக் கற்றுக் கொண்டது வாய்ப்பாட்டுத்தான். வீணையும், மிருதங்கமும் துணைப் பாடங்களாக எடுத்துக் கொண்டார். முதலில் மஹா வித்வான் ஸபேசய்யர் அவர்களிடம் நிறையப் பாட்டு கற்றுக் கொண்டிருக்கிறார். பொன்னய்யா பிள்ளையிடம் வாய்ப்பாட்டும், மிருதங்கமும் கற்றுக் கொண்டார். மிருதங்கத்தில் கச்சேரிகளுக்கு பக்க மேளம் வாசிக்கும் அளவிற்கு தேர்ச்சியும் பெற்றிருந்தார். வீணை வித்வான் தேசமங்கலம் ஸுப்ரமணியய்யரிடம் வீணை கற்றுக் கொண்டார்.

பிற்காலத்தில் வீணையையே ப்ரதான பாடமாக எடுக்க வேண்டிய சந்தர்ப்பம் வந்ததால் ஸுப்ரமணியய்யரிடம் தொடர்ந்து கற்று "ஸங்கீத பூஷணம்" பட்டம் பெற்றார்.

தன் வாய்ப்பாட்டு ஞானத்துடன் குரு தேச மங்கலம் ஸுப்ரமணியய்யரின் ஸம்பிரதாய சுத்தமான "காயகி" வீணை பாணியைக் கடை பிடித்து தன் உழைப்பாலும், ஆராய்ச்சியாலும் கொஞ்சமும் வழுவாத ஸம்பிரதாய சுத்தமான ஸங்கீத பாணியை உறுதியாக கடைபிடித்து பிற்காலத்தில் "கே.எஸ். நாராயணஸ்வாமி பாணி" என்ற ஒரு வழி முறையை உருவாக்கி நாடெங்கும் தன் பாணியை பரிமளிக்கச் செய்தார்.

ஸரஸ்வதி வீணை, அந்தப் புனிதமான வாத்யத்தின் ஸான்னித்யம் கெடாமல் எப்படி கையாள வேண்டுமென்று அமைதியுடன் ஆராய்ந்து வீணையையே தனது ஆசானாக மதித்து அதில் லயித்து வீணை வாசிப்பு என்றால் இப்படித்தான் இருக்க வேண்டும் என்பதை பெரிய பெரிய வித்வான்களிலிருந்து சிறு குழந்தைகள் வரை புரிந்து ரஸிக்கும்படி வாசித்துக் காட்டித் தன் புகழை இன்னும் ஒரு படி உயர்த்திக் கொண்டவர். அதற்கு இடைஞ்சலாக இருந்த எந்த இடையூறுகளையும் பொருட்படுத்தாது அவர் அமைதியாக, பொறுமையாக தனது கொள்கையிலேயே வழுவாது கடைசிவரை இருந்தார்.

எனது குருநாதர் அவர்களுக்கு குரு பக்தி ரொம்ப அதிகம். எந்தப் பாட்டையோ, ராகத்தையோ பற்றிப் பேசும்போதோ, வாசிக்கும்போதோ அவர் தன் குருநாதர் ஸபேசய்யர், பொன்னய்யா பிள்ளை, ஸுப்ரமணியய்யர் இவர்களைப் பற்றிக் குறிப்பிடாமல் இருக்க மாட்டார். தன் குருநாதர்கள் எப்படி அழகாக விளக்கிச் சொல்லுவார்கள். அவர்களெல்லாம் ஸம்பிரதாய சுத்தமான ஸங்கீதத்திற்காக எவ்வாறு உழைத்திருக்கிறார்கள் என்பதை ஆணித்தரமாக விவரிப்பார்.

ஸபேசய்யர், பொன்னய்யா பிள்ளை, தேசமங்கலம் ஸுப்ரமணியய்யர் இவர்கள் மூவரும் எப்பொழுதும் சேர்ந்து இருந்து கொண்டு ஒவ்வொரு க்ருதியையும், ராகத்தையும் ஆராய்ந்து வீணை வாசிப்பு என்றால் பாடுகிற மாதிரியே தான் இருக்க வேண்டும் என்று மற்ற இருவர் பாட ஸுப்ரமணியய்யர் வீணை வாசிப்பாராம்.

"ஸங்கீத பூஷணம்" பட்டம் பெற்றவுடனேயே அக்கலாசாலையில் ஆசிரியராக 9 வருடங்கள் பணியாற்றினார் என் குருநாதர். அந்த சமயத்தில் ஸ்ரீ பொன்னய்யா பிள்ளை அவர்களுக்கு தமிழ் க்ருதிகளை (நீலகண்ட சிவன், கோபால் க்ருஷ்ணபாரதி, திருப்புகழ்) ஸ்வரதாளக் குறிப்புடன் ஸ்வரப்படுத்தி அச்சிட உதவியாக இருந்து, அக்கிருதிகள் வெளிவரக் காரணமாகவும் இருந்தார்.

இதன் பிறகு திருவிதாங்கூர் மஹாராணி ஸேதுபார்வதிபாய் அவர்களின் அழைப்பின் பேரில் திருவனந்தபுரம் "ஸ்வாதி திருநாள் ஸங்கீத கலாசாலை"யில் முதல்வர் ஸ்ரீசெம்மங்குடி ஸ்ரீநிவாஸய்யர் கீழ் ஆசிரியராக பதவி ஏற்றார். கடைசியில் அக்கலாசாலையின் முதல்வராகவே பணியாற்றி ஓய்வு பெற்றார். இந்த இடைக் காலத்தில் அவர் மஹாராணி ஸேதுபார்வதிபாய் அவர்களின் ஆதரவுடனும், ஸ்ரீசெம்மங்குடி ஸார் அவர்களின் ஒத்துழைப்புடனும் ஸங்கீதத்திற்கு ஆற்றின தொண்டுகள் ஏராளம்.

ஸம்பிரதாயமான ஸங்கீதத்தைக் கற்றுக் கொடுத்து நிறைய மாணவ மாணவிகளைத் தயார் செய்தார். அரண்மனையில் ஆஸ்தான வித்வானாக இருந்து மஹாராணி குடும்பத்தாருக்கு ஆசானாகவும் இருந்து வீணை கற்றுக் கொடுத்தார். மஹாராஜா ஸ்வாதி திருநாள் க்ருதிகளை சேகரித்து, ஸ்வரதாளக் குறிப்புடன் வெளியிடும் பெரிய பொறுப்பை ஏற்று ஸ்ரீ செம்மங்குடி ஸாருக்கு உதவியாக இருந்து, அதை நல்ல முறையில் ப்ராபல்யம் அடையக் காரணமாக இருந்தார்.

அதன் பிறகு 1970லிருந்து “பம்பாய் ஷண்முகானந்த ஸங்கீத வித்யாலயா”வின் முதல்வராக அண்ணியேற்றார். 15 வருடங்கள் இவ்வித்யாலயாவின் முதல்வராக இருந்து அதை ஒரு உன்னதமான நிலைக்கு கொண்டு வந்தார். ஆரம்பத்தில் வெறும் வாய்ப்பாட்டு மாத்திரமாக இருந்த வித்யாலயாவில் வீணை, வயலின், மிருதங்கம், ஸிதார், தபலா என்று பல பிரிவுகளாக இருந்த வித்யாலயாவில் வீணை, வயலின், மிருதங்கம், ஆதரவுடனும், அந்த விரிவுபடுத்தி ஸபா கமிட்டி அங்கத்தினர்களின் ஒத்துழைப்புடனும், ஆதரவுடனும், அந்த இவைகளுக்கு இணையாக தரத்தில் உயர்த்தி நல்ல முறையில் நடத்தி வந்தார். அவரது தலைமையின் கீழ் நிறைய ஆசிரியர்கள் பணியாற்றி வந்தார்கள். அதில் நானும் ஒருவர். 500க்கும் மேல் மாணவ மாணவிகள் அச்சமயம் அங்கு படித்துக் கொண்டிருந்தார்கள். அப்பள்ளிக்கு ஸங்கீத டிப்ளோமா (KVC)விற்கு பம்பாய் பல்கலை கழகத்தின் அங்கீகாரம் கிடைத்ததற்கு “இவரது தலைமையும் ஒரு முக்கிய காரணம்” என்பது டாக்டர் நாராயண மேனன் அவர்களின் கருத்து.

பலமுறை அயல் நாடுகளுக்கு பல்வேறு இசை நிறுவனங்களின் அழைப்பை ஏற்றுச் சென்று கர்னாடக இசையின் சிறப்பை உணர்த்தியவர் என் குருநாதர். பாரதத்தின் மாநில, தேசிய விருதுகள் பலவற்றைப் பெற்றவர்.

கேரளா விருது	1962
தமிழ்நாடு விருது	1968
மத்திய ஸங்கீத நாடக அகாதமி விருது	1968
பத்ம பூஷண்	1977
சென்னை மியூசிக் அகாதமியின் “ஸங்கீத கலாநிதி”	1980
ஸ்வாதி புரஸ்கார், “ஸ்வாதி ரத்னா”	1999

எனக்கு அவரிடம் 23 வருடங்கள் வீணை கற்றுக் கொள்ளும் வாய்ப்பு கிடைத்தது என் பாக்கியம். முதல் நான் ஸ்வாதி திருநாள் கலாசாலை மாணவியாக இருந்தபோது 8 வருடங்களும், பின் அவர் பம்பாய் ஷண்முகானந்தா ஸங்கீத வித்யாலயாவின் முதல்வராகப் பணியாற்றிய 15 வருடங்களும், அவரின் கீழ் ஆசிரியராகப் பணியாற்றியது மட்டுமல்லாமல், மாணவியாக பல அரிய பெரிய விஷயங்களைக் கற்றறிந்தேன்.

இது தவிர அவர் வாழ்ந்து இருந்த கடைசி காலம் வரை அவரது ஆலோசனையும், ஆதரவும் எனக்கு பரிபூர்ணமாக இருந்தது என்று சொன்னால் மிகையாகாது.

### ஆத்மார்த்த சாதனை

இசையை அப்யஸிப்பது என்பது ஸம்பிரதாயமான, உண்மையான ஸங்கீதத்தை நாடிச் செல்வதற்கு ஒப்பானது என்பது அவர் கருத்து. முன்பே கூறியதுபோல் தனது பாரம்பர்யம், நம் முன்னோர்கள் வகுத்துக் கொடுத்த வழி, தன் குருமார்கள் கடைபிடித்து காட்டிக் கொடுத்த ஸம்பிரதாய சுத்தமான ஸங்கீதம், அதைத் தொடர்ந்து அவர் வீணையின் பல நுட்பங்களையும் நன்றாக, அமைதியாக ஆராய்ந்து, அறிந்தவைகளை மிக நேர்த்தியாக அதிசயிக்கத்தக்க முறையில், விளக்கி, வாசித்தும் காட்டுவார். நம்மிடமும் அந்த அளவிற்கு எதிர்பார்ப்பார்.

மிக்க பொறுமையுடன் சொல்லிக் கொடுப்பார். அவர் வாசித்துக் காட்டியதை நாம் நன்கு புரிந்து கொண்டு வாசிக்கும் வரை நம்முடன் திரும்பத்திரும்ப அவரும் கூடவே வாசிப்பார். கீர்த்தனைகளை நாம் அதன் ராகபாவம், அழகு கெடாமல் ஸம்பிரதாய சுத்தமாக வாசிக்கிறோமா என்பதில் ரொம்ப கருத்தாக இருப்பார். மேலும் நாம் அதன் ஸாஹித்யம், பதப் பிரிப்பு இவைகளைப் புரிந்து கொண்டு வாசிக்க வேண்டுமென்று பாடிக்காட்டி, அர்த்தம் சொல்லி வாசித்துக் காட்டுவார். தவிர, அவர் வாய்ப்பாட்டு, வீணை இரண்டும் முறையாகக் கற்று, தெலுங்கு, ஸம்ஸ்கிருத பாஷா ஞானமும் உடையவராக இருந்ததால், அவர் வீணை

வாசிக்கும்போது தத்ரூபமாகப் பாடுவது போலவே இருக்கும். வெறும் கீர்த்தனையை இப்படி வாசித்தாலே போதுமே. அதில் எல்லாமே அடங்கியிருக்கிறதே என்பார். வீணைப் பாடாந்திரத்தையும் வாய்ப்பாட்டில் பாடி மெருகு படுத்திக் கொள் என்று என்னிடம் அடிக்கடி சொல்லுவார். அவ்வளவு உயர்ந்த பாடாந்திரம் அவருடையது.

தவிர அந்தந்த ராகங்களின் கமகப்ரயோகங்களைத் துல்லியமாக வீணையில் வாசித்துக் காட்டி (க்ரஹ, ந்யாஸ, அனுஸ்வரத்துடன்) தெளிவு படுத்துவார். ஒரு ராகம் வாசிக்கும்போது மற்ற ராகங்களின் சாயை துளிக்கூட வராமல் நாம் ஜாக்கிரதையாகப் பாடவேண்டும், வாசிக்க வேண்டும் என்று வலியுறுத்துவார். அப்படிப்பட்ட ராகங்களை எப்படிக் கையாள வேண்டும் என்பதை ரொம்ப அழகாக, ஸந்தேகத்திற்கு இடமில்லாமல் வாசித்துக் காட்டுவார்.

கச்சேரிகளில் ரஸிகர்களுக்காகவோ கூட்டத்திற்காகவோ வாசிக்க மாட்டார். அவர் ஆத்மார்த்தமாகத் தனக்காகவே லயித்து வாசித்து ரஸிகர்களையும் தன்னுடன் லயிக்க வைப்பார். அவருடைய வாசிப்பின் உயர்ந்த அம்சம் என்னவென்றால் பாட்டின் வாசிப்பிலேயே ராகத்தின் உருவத்தை உணரலாம். மும்மூர்த்திகளின் க்ருதிகளை அதுவும் சவுக்க கால க்ருதிகளை அவர் வாசித்துக் கேட்கும்போது, உதாரணமாக “மீனாக்ஷிமே முதம்தேஹி” என்ற முத்துஸ்வாமி தீக்ஷிதரின் பூர்விகல்யாணி க்ருதியை அவர் அழகாக ராகபாவத்துடன், ஸாஹித்ய அர்த்த பாவத்துடன் அவரே லயித்து வாசித்துக் கேட்கும்போது, நமக்கு அவர் அந்த ராகத்தில் விரிவாக ஸஞ்சாரம் செய்து, நிரவல் பண்ணின மாதிரி ஒரு நிறைவு தோன்றும்.

### பழகும் பல்யம்

ரொம்ப கண்ணியமாகவும், அடக்கத்துடனும் அன்புடனும் பழகுவார். வீணை மாமா, வீணை ஸார், வீணை வித்வான் நாராயணஸ்வாமி என்று பலரும் அவரை அன்புடன் அழைத்துப் பழகுவதை நான் பல சந்தர்ப்பங்களில் கண்டிருக்கிறேன். வித்வான்களுக்கிடையில் அவருக்கு நல்ல மதிப்பும், கௌரவமும் இருந்ததை நான் அநேக சந்தர்ப்பங்களில் நேரில் கண்டிருக்கிறேன். ஸங்கீத விஷயமாக எதைப் பற்றியும், எப்பொழுது கேட்டாலும் அவர் அமைதியாக அழகாக விளக்கங்களுடன் தனது ஆராய்ச்சி நுட்பத்துடன், ஆதாரத்துடன் விளக்கம் சொல்லுவார். விளக்கங்கள் தரும்போது உவமானத்துடன் ரொம்ப அழகாக நம் மனதில் பதியும்படிச் சொல்லுவார். அவர் சிந்தனை ஸங்கீதம் என்றாலே தெய்வீகம், புனிதம், ஸான்னித்யம் என்பதால் அவரது உவமானமும் அதற்கிணையாகவே இருக்கும்.

### ஓர் உதாரணம்

ஒரு சந்தர்ப்பத்தில் ஒரு பேட்டியின்போது கேட்டது : இப்பொழுது எல்லோரும் வீணைக்கு “காண்டாகட் மைக்” வைத்துக் கொள்கிறார்களே!! அது குறித்து உங்கள் அபிப்பிராயம் என்ன ? கே.எஸ்.என். சிறிது நேர அமைதிக்கு பிறகு அடக்கமாக, என் வரையிலும் அது அவசியம் என்று தோன்றவில்லை. வீணையின் த்வனியே இன்பமாக மனதைத் தொடும்படி எவ்வளவு இனிமையாக இருக்கிறது. அதை அப்படியே புனிதமாக வாசித்து மற்றவர்களையும் அதை ரசித்து ஆனந்திக்குமாறு செய்யலாமே. குழந்தையின் மழலைச் சொல் கேட்க ரொம்ப இனிமையாக இருக்கும். மழலைச் சொல்லை இயற்கையாகவே ரசித்து அனுபவிப்பதை விட்டு ‘மைக்’ வைத்து ரசித்தால் எப்படி என்றார்! தொடர்ந்து நாம் வீணை வாசிக்கும்போது ஒவ்வொரு ஸ்வரத்தையும் ஒவ்வொரு புஷ்பமாக நினைத்து அந்தந்த ராக தேவதையை ம்ருதுவாக புஷ்பத்தால் அர்ச்சிக்கிற மாதிரி பாவித்து வாசிக்க வேண்டும். அதைவிட்டு விட்டு கல்லால் அடிக்கிற மாதிரி அர்ச்சித்தால் (வாசித்தால்) என்றார்.

எல்லா ஸங்கீதத்தையும் ரசிப்பார். அவர் வாழ்த்திருந்த ஸமயம் இருந்த எல்லா பெரிய வித்வான்களிடமும் ஒரு மதிப்பு. அதுவும் செம்மங்குடி ஸ்ரீனிவாஸய்யரிடம் ஒரு அளவிலா பக்தி, மதிப்பு அவருக்கு உண்டு. எல்லா பெரிய வித்வான்களுடையவும் பாட்டோ, வாத்தியமோ



அதை ரசித்து அழகாக விளக்குவார். அதைப்போல சிறிய தலைமுறைகளையும் நன்கு ஆதரிப்பார். மேற்கத்திய ஸங்கீதம், வடநாட்டு ஸங்கீதம் இரண்டிலுமே அவருக்கு ஈடுபாடு அதிகம். நிறைய ரசித்துக் கேட்பார். அதிலுள்ள நல்ல அம்சங்களை பாராட்டத் தவற மாட்டார்.

வித்ரான்களின் கருத்து : கே.எஸ்.என். பற்றி செம்மங்குடி அவர்கள் ஒரு சமயம் கூறியது : கரை கண்டவர் கிடையாது என்று சொல்லுவார்கள். ஆனால் நம் நாராயண ஸ்வாமி அதைக் கண்டவர்.

ஸங்கீத கலாநிதி கே.வி. நாராயணஸ்வாமி : நாராயண ஸ்வாமி ஸார் கச்சேரிக்கிடையில் ஸ்ருதி சேர்ப்பது கூட கேட்பதற்கு ரொம்ப ரம்யமாக இருக்கும்.

ம்ருதங்க வித்வான் ஸ்ரீ பாலக்காடு மணியம்யார் : கே.எஸ்.என். க்ருதிகளை ரொம்ப அழகாக வாசிக்கும் முறை, ராக பாவம், தாளத்தின் லாகவம் இவை அவருக்கு பக்க மேளம் வாசிக்க ரொம்ப உற்சாகமாக இருக்கும் என்பாராம்.

இன்று ஸாரின் சிஷ்யர்களில் பலர் நாடெங்கும் பல பாகங்களிலும் நல்ல ஆசிரியர்களாகவும், கச்சேரி கலைஞர்களாகவும், ஆகாசவாணி, தொலைக்காட்சி கேந்திரங்களில் 'ஏ' க்ரேட் கலைஞர்களாகவும், பல பொறுப்பான பதவிகளிலும் இருக்கிறார்கள் என்றால் மிகையாகாது. பாரத் ரத்னா ஸ்ரீமதி எம்.எஸ். சுப்புலக்ஷ்மி அவர்களும் ஸாரிடம்தான் வீணை கற்றுக் கொண்டவர்.

காஞ்சிப் பெரியவர் பரமாச்சாரியார் அவர்களின் அனுக்ரஹம் ஸாருக்கு பரிபூர்ணமாக கிடைத்திருக்கிறது. பரமாச்சாரியார் அவர்கள் முன்பு நிறைய சந்தர்ப்பங்களில் வீணை வாசித்து அவரை மகிழ வைக்கும் பாக்கியம் பெற்றிருக்கிறார். பரமாச்சாரியார் அவர்கள் ஒரு ஸந்தர்ப்பத்தில் வீணையைப் பற்றி என் குருநாதரிடம் சொன்னது :

வீணை என்பது புனிதமான வாத்தியம். அதை கையில் வைத்துக் கொள்ளவே நாம் ரொம்ப பாக்கியம் செய்ய வேண்டும். அதிலும் கலைவாணி ஸரஸ்வதி தேவியே வாசித்த அந்த வாத்தியத்தைக் கையிலேந்தி வாசிக்க நாம் பூர்வ ஜென்மத்தில் புண்ணியம் செய்திருக்க வேண்டும்.

ஸரஸ்வதி பூஜையன்று பிறந்து கலைவாணியின் பூரண அருளுடனும், பரமாச்சாரியார் அவர்களின் அனுக்ரஹத்துடனும் வீணையையே தனது குருவாக ஏற்று இசை உலகத்திற்கு தனது இறுதி காலம் வரை தொண்டு செய்து ஒரு இசை ஞானியாகத் திகழ்ந்த எனது குருநாதர் கலைவாணியுடனேயே ஐக்கியமாகி விட்டார். அவரது ஆத்மா சாந்தியடைய இறைவனை பிரார்த்திக்கிறேன்.

எனது குருநாதர் காட்டிக் கொடுத்த அந்த வழியிலே சென்று அவர் விட்டுச் சென்ற அந்தப் பணியை மீண்டும் தொடர்ந்து, அவரது பாணி மிளிரச் செய்வதே என் போன்ற அவருடைய சிஷ்யர்களின் கடமை என்பதை வலியுறுத்தி, அதை நாங்கள் வழுவாது கடைப் பிடைப்போம் என்று இவ்வஞ்சலியை அவரது சிஷ்யர்கள் அனைவரது சார்பாக அவர் பாதத்தில் ஸமர்ப்பிக்கிறேன்.

**கல்யாணி சர்மா**

